

WASHINGTON (AFP) — China supplies Iran and Iraq with material and technology for their weapons programmes, according to a U.S. Navy report cited by the Washington Times Tuesday. The Office of Naval Intelligence report on maritime challenges across the globe said a merchant ship was found recently in Saudi Arabia to be transporting "illegal chemicals from China to the Middle East, intended for the production of missile fuel in Iraq." A similar situation exists today in Iran with a steady flow of materials and technologies from China to Iran, the navy report said, according to the Times. "This exchange is one of the most active WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] programmes in the Third World and is taking place in a region of great strategic importance to the United States," the Times quoted the report as saying.

Jordan Times

An independent political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي.

RIYADH (AFP) — Foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are to meet in Saudi Arabia on September 13-14 to discuss the Middle East Economic Summit which Qatar plans to host, officials said Tuesday. In protest at the deadlock in the Arab-Israeli peace process, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have decided to boycott the November conference in Doha to which Israel is invited. Gulf states are not expected to adopt a final stand on the conference at their Abha talks but instead await an Arab League foreign ministers' meeting in Cairo on September 20-21. Kuwait and Bahrain also favour a boycott, according to Gulf diplomats, whereas Oman plans to attend the Doha summit.

Crown Prince stresses important role of Russia in Mideast peace

MOSCOW (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday stressed the need to exert intensive efforts to break the current stalemate in the Middle East peace process and to achieve progress on all tracks.

The Crown Prince attributed the current deadlock in the peace process to the focus on security aspects, the closure of the Palestinian territories, and attempts to prejudice the final stage negotiations, including the status of Jerusalem, borders and settlements.

In an address delivered upon receiving an honorary doctorate degree from Moscow State Institute for International Relations, Prince Hassan stressed the important role of Russia, as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, in pushing the peace process forward.

Prince Hassan praised the institute's contributions to advancing understanding between the countries of West Asia and North West Asia.

"I cannot but express the hope that this august body

which has contributed so much to the understanding of complex international problems and to their resolution can commit itself to the normal art of conversation in all aspects of human achievements," the Crown Prince said. He added that the character of the threats to peace and stability in the world stems from a struggle for regional hegemony by some regional powers in specific parts of the world.

Underlining the dangers posed by economic recession and its negative consequences on peace, Prince

Hassan said: "It is recognised that stagnating economies present grave dangers to peace, possibly graver than external military aggression."

Highlighting the grave consequences of increased unemployment, poverty and competition for global markets, Prince Hassan said "under-employment" and deepening levels of poverty, coupled with the struggle for global markets have aggravated a situation hampered by restrictive state

(Continued on page 7)

PNA minister says Israel trying to disrupt Albright's visit task

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A senior Palestinian National Authority (PNA) official accused Israel on Tuesday of working to wreck the upcoming visit of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to the region.

"We believe that there are Israeli attempts to disrupt the task of Ms. Albright," said Yasser Abed Rabbo following a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

Mr. Abed Rabbo said the Israeli attempts are being exerted through "concentrating on what is called the security issue and flooding the visit with many fabricated security details... in order to impede political efforts to overcome the log-jam" in the peace process.

Mr. Abed Rabbo, the minister of culture and information in the PNA, said that a Palestinian delegation was on its way on Tuesday to Washington to hold talks with officials at the State Department on Ms. Albright's visit to the region, scheduled to start on Sept. 10.

The Palestinian delegation includes senior Palestinian negotiators Mahmoud Abbas and Saeb Erekat.

"We think that the political issues are what will help this visit reach a success. We think that the statement which was made by Ms. Albright, a few weeks ago, represents a good base for the visit and for any initiative by the American administration," The Palestinian official



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Palestinian Culture and Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo talk at the Prime Ministry in Amman, on Tuesday (photo by Yousef 'Allan)

said that any U.S. initiative should focus on four elements, namely "land-for-peace, the complete fulfilment of interim agreement issues, to start once again final status negotiations and to halt any unilateral actions by Israel on the ground."

Mr. Abed Rabbo emphasised that unilateral steps taken by the Israelis which they claim to be a kind of softening of the closure, are only cosmetic steps.

"These principles are the principles which we believe should direct any political initiative in order to reconvene negotiations once again," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

"Any solutions failing to meet these principles will lead to... worsening the situation in the region and

hampering the objectives behind Ms. Albright's visit," the Palestinian official said.

Mr. Abed Rabbo said that recent Israeli measures to ease the four-week-old closure of the West bank and Gaza Strip are not satisfactory.

"All the steps that are taken by the Israelis which they claim to be a kind of softening of the closure, are only cosmetic steps. They are meaningless and they have no effect on the situation," he said.

"Still, the collective punishment against the Palestinian people is the policy that is adopted by the Israeli government. Our money, the Palestinian money, is still not released and is kept by the Israeli

government," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

"Tens of thousands of our workers are not allowed to go to work... all these measures are in fact creating great obstacles in front of any real development in relations between the two sides," Mr. Abed Rabbo told reporters.

"These are fascist and racial measures. They are not part of any compromise with the Israelis and they should come to an end," he said.

The Palestinian official said that during his meeting with Dr. Majali, he briefed him on the latest development in the Palestinian territories and the hardships the Palestinians face because of the closure.

Israel rules out settlement freeze ahead of Albright Mideast tour

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAEL REJECTED anew on Tuesday U.S. demands for a freeze in the construction of Jewish housing in occupied Arab areas, casting a shadow over next week's visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

"We favour strengthening existing Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and will continue

to build everywhere in Jerusalem," said Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh, who was scheduled to leave for Washington later Tuesday for talks with Ms. Albright.

"There is no reason that we should be obliged to pay a price to begin final status negotiations with the Palestinians," he said, referring to long-overdue negotiations on a permanent peace settlement for the occupied Palestinian territories.

Mr. Naveh, speaking on Israeli radio, was denying press reports that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was considering as a goodwill gesture to be announced during Ms. Albright's visit to order a temporary suspension of construction of a new Jewish neighbourhood in east Jerusalem.

Start of construction at the site in March sparked the current crisis with the Palestinians, who say that

Jewish settlement building is designed to bolster Israeli claims to territory which should be the subject of the final status negotiations.

The Palestinians demand all of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab east Jerusalem for a state of their own.

Under the Oslo peace accords, Israel has promised in the final status talks to negotiate the status

(Continued on page 7)

7 paparazzi face justice probe for manslaughter

PARIS (R) — A judge on Tuesday ordered all 7 French photographers investigated for suspected manslaughter in the car crash which killed Princess Diana, lawyers said.

Judge Herve Stephan released Jacques Langevin of the Sygma agency and Nicolas Arsov of the Sipa agency after placing them under formal examination — the French equivalent to pressing charges — for suspected manslaughter, bodily harm and failure to assist accident victims.

In all, the photographers were to face Judge Stephan at the law courts next to the police headquarters where they have been held since being detained at the scene of the fatal crash in a Paris road tunnel early on Sunday.

Messrs. Langevin and Arsov were brought before the judge in handcuffs.

Diana's car was being chased by a posse of photographers on motorbikes when it slammed head-on into a concrete pillar.

The other photographers were named as Frenchmen Christian Martinez of the Angeli agency, Romualdo Rat of Gamma, Serge Arnal of Stilla and Macedonian freelancer Laszlo Veres.

The seventh, a French motorcycle driver for Gamma, has not been publicly identified.

Sygma Director Hubert Henrotte vigorously denied that Mr. Langevin — the agency's photographer in Beijing at the time of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre — was one of the "paparazzi" accused of chasing Diana to her death.

He arrived at the scene seven minutes after the crash and only took pictures of the rescue efforts and the wrecked car.

The photographers

lawyers said that all seven, and others who escaped arrest, had snapped pictures of the wreck, leaving them open to a charge of failing to assist victims.

Manslaughter and failing to assist victims each carry up to five years in prison and \$81,500 in fines.

Lawyers said their clients, exhausted after 48 hours of police questioning, were indignant at being held. Unaware of a worldwide furor blaming them for hounding the princess to her death, they believed they had done nothing wrong.

Lawyer William Bourdon said they were being turned into "sacrificial lambs."

"What is happening is showbiz justice, and it's justice carried out for the foreign ministry," he said.

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Only friends invited to funeral by Buckingham

Combined agency dispatches

WORLD PRESIDENTS and monarchs will not attend the funeral of the late Diana, who was killed in a car crash in Paris at the weekend, unless they had a "close relationship" with the princess at the wishes of the British royal family, it was clear on Tuesday.

The White House indicated Monday that President Bill Clinton would not travel to London for the funeral of the princess.

Spokesman Joe Lockhart stressed that the president had not received an invitation to the service "because this is not a state funeral."

The White House said Tuesday that Hillary Clinton will attend the funeral service.

However, Mr. Lockhart stressed that the first lady would not lead an official U.S. delegation to the funeral and would not represent the U.S. government.

Her presence at the funeral service in London's Westminster Abbey was a private matter, he said.

Invited by Buckingham Palace and the family of the late princess, the first lady's presence was as a result of her "personal association" with the princess, the spokesman said at the

(Continued on page 7)

Opposition to meet today after giving up dialogue with Cabinet

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Opposition groups and independent personalities determined to boycott the elections are scheduled to hold a meeting today to discuss future strategies.

Though belonging to different political backgrounds and shades, the opposition representatives agree that the meeting stems from, and therefore seals, the government's failure to open a dialogue and persuade the opposition to rescind its decision not to participate in the Nov. 4 polls.

"The meeting will centre on what is next, after the dialogue is proven to have failed," said leftist Salem Nahhas, secretary general of Al Hashd, the first party

to respond, early July, to the Muslim Brotherhood's historic call for a general boycott.

Two weeks ago, the government held a collective meeting with pro-boycott opposition parties and a separate meeting with the Islamists, the back-bone of the opposition. Both meetings focused on ways and means to activate a dialogue, but ended with no apparent results and did not touch on the opposition's demands, which include the freezing of recent controversial amendments to the Press and Publications Law, the enhancement of public freedoms and the abolition of the one-person, one-vote system, as well as a comprehensive plan for constitutional reforms.

According to Minister of State for Information

Affairs Samir Mutawi, the dialogue was scheduled to resume "early this week," but opposition leaders yesterday told the Jordan Times they had not yet been approached by the government for further talks.

"The government does not want a dialogue, and the proof is that dialogue has only been in the newspapers, but not in reality," Mr. Nahhas said.

"What we have had in the past weeks was only a dialogue about the dialogue, but a real dialogue has never started," he added.

Today's meeting will reportedly be held at noon at the headquarters of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), Jordan's strongest opposition party.

Earlier in the morning, also today, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali is

scheduled to address a press conference expected to focus on election issues and the government-opposition dialogue.

Mr. Nahhas said the opposition groups' meeting will be attended by representatives from the seven pro-boycott opposition parties, the Muslim Brotherhood, leaders from the professional associations, representatives of the 82 independent personalities who issued two weeks ago a strong-worded pro-boycott declaration, and a group of opposition figures who are gathering around prominent Islamist opposition leader Leith Shbeilat.

Outspoken Mr. Shbeilat ignited an animated tete-a-tete on democracy with

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinian police arrest two men suspected of selling land to Israelis

SAMUA (AFP) — The Palestinian police have arrested two local officials in this village near Hebron, apparently in connection to land sales, relatives and Israeli sources said Tuesday.

Ahmad Khalaileh and Ahmad Abu Aqila, both former members of the local council of Samua village, were taken from their homes by Palestinian

police 11 days ago. Mr. Aqila's son Sufian told Agence France Presse.

Sufian said he visited his father in detention in Hebron soon after but was not told on what charges the two men were being held.

Israeli security sources said the two men, whose village is under Israeli army control, were detained on suspicion of

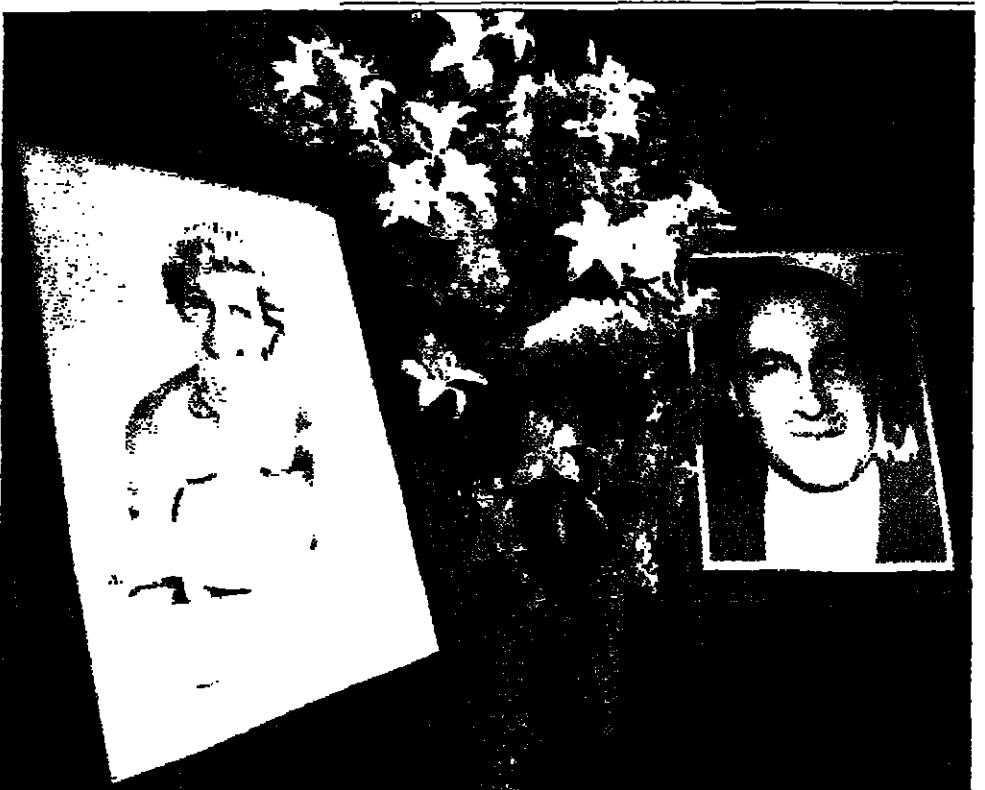
selling land to Jews, Israel Radio said.

In May and June, self-rule police launched a crackdown on Palestinians suspected of selling land to Jewish settlers, a crime considered treason by Palestinians because it puts land they seek for an independent state in the hands of Israelis.

During that crackdown, the bodies of three suspect-

ed land-dealers were found slain execution-style in areas around Ramallah, while a fourth reportedly committed suicide while being detained by Palestinian police.

Israel raised an outcry over the murders, accusing Palestinian security forces of implementing a death penalty for land sales to Israelis under an old Jordanian law.



Portraits of Diana and Dodi in the window of Harrods department store, Tuesday. A book of condolences has been opened by Dodi's father, Mohammad Fayed, at Harrods (Reuters photo)

Syria hails Albright visit and promises cooperation

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria on Monday hailed the upcoming Middle East visit of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as a chance to drag the faltering peace process back from the brink of disaster.

The official Tishrin newspaper said that Ms. Albright would receive a warm welcome in Syria on her first regional trip that starts on Sept. 9 and will also take in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Israel.

The paper said Ms. Albright "will receive total cooperation in Damascus to revive the peace process

and to put it back on track in line with the principles on which it was launched."

Tishrin said it was "natural that Damascus should welcome anybody trying to create the right conditions for a just and global peace which will eliminate the causes of violence and tension."

However, the paper warned that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu may try to create problems to detract from Ms. Albright's mission.

"It cannot be ruled out that the government of Netanyahu will do some-

thing provocative to sabotage Ms. Albright's mission and to stop her bringing about the necessary conditions for the peace process to continue," it said.

Al Baath, the newspaper of the ruling Baath Party, said Ms. Albright's visit provided a "new opportunity" to break the deadlock in the peace process.

But the paper cautioned that the "ball is in the American court," and it accused Washington of frequently showing "common place" towards Israel.

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed five months

ago after Israel began construction of a new Jewish settlement on the edge of historically Arab east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians want as the capital of a future state.

Tension between the sides reached boiling point after the Jerusalem bombing in July.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks have been frozen since February 1996, with Syria demanding that the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights be returned as a condition for making peace with the Jewish state.



LEBANON BOMB: The mother of two teenage Lebanese boys wounded by a bomb in south Lebanon cries in grief on Tuesday. The boys were wounded by a bomb on the outskirts of the village of Majdal Selem in south Lebanon. It was not clear who planted the bomb but the mainstream Shi'ite Muslim Amal movement accused Israeli forces of planting it (Reuters photo).

Israel planning major offensive to halt land 'theft' by Israeli Arabs, W. Bankers

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel is preparing a major offensive to halt what officials call the "theft" of state lands by Arabs both inside Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Haaretz newspaper reported Tuesday.

A commission headed by Avigdor Lieberman, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's chief of staff, recommended that individual Jews be assisted in setting up extensive farms on state lands to prevent Arabs from gaining control of additional areas, the newspaper said.

Mr. Lieberman told Haaretz that 280,000 hectares of state land had been "illegally seized" by Arabs in the Negev Desert and Galilee region of Israel and in parts of the West Bank still under full Israeli control.

He said it was urgent to

deal with the problem "without giving consideration to political pressures."

Mr. Lieberman said his commission had recommended that Mr. Netanyahu reestablish a 1980's era cabinet committee on settlements to attack the problem.

The committee last existed under the previous Likud government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to oversee a vast increase in the size and number of Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian areas.

The new committee would be charged with providing aid to Jews chosen through public bids to establish extensive farms on state lands, Mr. Lieberman said.

It would also wage legal action against "illegal construction" by Arabs on state lands and would examine the possibility of declaring

some areas army "firing zones" to prevent entry, he said.

Azmi Bishara, an Arab-Israeli member of parliament from the independent National Democratic Assembly (NDS), angrily denounced Mr. Lieberman's project, saying Mr. Netanyahu's aide "is still living in the apartheid era."

"It's not possible to send one Jew to create a farm and prevent dozens of Arabs from using land that they need," Mr. Bishara said on Israeli radio.

"The state confiscates land from Arabs, declares them state lands and then uses them to build homes for Jews. When Arabs act, they call it land theft, when it's Jews, they call it legal construction," he said.

Under Israeli law, the government can declare as state-land any property whose ownership cannot be

proven.

The statute has been used to seize property abandoned by Palestinians who fled the region at the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 as well as vast tracks of the southern Negev desert peopled by bedouin nomads.

Palestinians in the occupied territories complain that Israel refuses to recognise land titles issued prior to 1948, notably by the former Ottoman rulers.

Nearly 90 per cent of the territory of Israel is technically state land, while more than 50 per cent of the West Bank has been declared state land.

Recent Israeli press reports said the government was considering declaring hundreds of additional hectares on the West Bank and Gaza Strip state lands as a first step towards occupying the territory.

'Iraq-based rebels hit Iran targets 294 times in 1997'

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iranian exile group based in Iraq said Tuesday it had carried out 294 attacks against Iranian government targets this year.

Mujahideen Khalq said in a statement distributed to reporters in Baghdad that the group's leader, Massoud Rajavi, "announced that in the first seven months of 1997, the Mujahideen have carried out 294 operations inside Iran."

The Iranian government has in the past few months reported increased clashes between security forces and

the Mujahideen. Mohammad, the group's foreign affairs chief, told reporters the operations ranged from attacking bases of Iran's revolutionary guards, their vehicles and engaging in clashes with them.

The organisation uses Iraq as a spring-board for attacks inside Iran. It has several camps, equipped with tanks, heavy guns and helicopter gunships, close to the borders with Iran.

Mr. Rajavi said three new military camps had been set up along the border, bring-

ing the number to eight, because of an influx of Iranians into neighbouring Iraq to join the group.

Mujahideen bases in Iraq have been the target of air and rocket attacks by Tehran. Their office in Baghdad, now ringed by a concrete wall, has weathered mortar and bomb attacks.

The group said Monday that it had elected Mahvash Sephiri as its new secretary-general for two years. She replaced Shahrazad Sadr.

Saudi Arabia executes two men

JEDDAH (AP) — Saudi Arabia Monday executed a Saudi murderer and an Indian drug smuggler, bringing the number of executions in the kingdom this year to 88.

An interior ministry statement said Humaid Hamid Malki, a Saudi, was executed in the Red Sea port of Jeddah for having shot dead a fellow citizen, Khalid Ayyed Malki, after an argument.

In a second beheading in Jeddah, Marghoub Hussein Mohammad, an Indian, was executed for smuggling an undisclosed amount of heroine and hashish into the kingdom, the ministry said.

The ministry gave no other details about the cases.

Saudi Arabia's Islamic courts impose the death penalty for rape, murder, drug trafficking and armed robbery. Executions are carried out with a sword in public.

Last year 71 people were beheaded.

Human rights groups have criticised the executions on grounds that the accused are not defended by lawyers during their trials.

Egypt paper condemns Netanyahu's criticism of spy trial verdict

CAIRO (AFP) — An official Egyptian newspaper Tuesday slammed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his "presumptuousness" in saying an Israeli sentenced to a prison term with hard labour for spying here was innocent.

"Netanyahu confirms every day the opinion of many Israeli politicians who criticise his lack of political experience, his pride, his presumptuousness and his haughty character," Galal Dewidar, editor-in-chief of the government newspaper Al Akhbar, wrote.

The prime minister told Israel Radio Monday that as the official head of both Mossad and Shin Bet, Israel's foreign and domestic intelligence services, was "well placed to affirm that Azzam Azzam was never involved in espionage activities."

Azzam, an Israeli Druze, was convicted Sunday on charges of spying in Egypt and was sentenced to 15 years in prison with hard labour.

The Druze sect is an offshoot of Islam.

Sudanese team starts bid to normalise ties with Egypt

Democratic Unionist Party former official to help in restoring normal relations

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A non-governmental delegation from north Sudan plans to leave for Cairo soon seeking to defuse strained relations between Khartoum and Cairo, an independent newspaper reported Tuesday.

Al Shareef Al Syasi daily, quoting what it termed "an informed source," said "a political relaxation" between the two countries "is in sight in view of threats posed against Sudan from the east and the south coupled with the Israeli

intervention in the Horn of Africa, jeopardising interests of the Nile valley states."

Sudan's fundamentalist-backed military Junta has on several occasions accused Israel of supporting Eritrea against Khartoum, which is also battling a southern rebel movement, with a view to gaining a geo-political foothold in the Red Sea region.

Residents of Wadi Halfa in northern Sudan have been hard hit economically since the suspension of

steamer traffic through their river port in 1995.

Meanwhile, a former official of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), one of the main political movements before all were banned following a military coup in 1989, said he would embark on efforts to restore normal ties between Sudan and Egypt.

Sherif Zein Al Abdin Al Hindi, the ex-secretary general of the DUP, recently returned home from a self-imposed eight-year exile. Now heading a committee

for dialogue between the government and its opposition, he said in an interview published by the official Sudan News Agency on Tuesday that he would seek to normalise relations with Egypt.

"This task comes as a top priority duty of us as Sudanese citizens," Mr. Hindi said, adding that he had felt "a full understanding and a genuine desire by officials in Khartoum for improvement of relations" with Egypt.

He added that a long-

standing territorial dispute over the border area of Halaib was not difficult for the peoples of Egypt and Sudan to resolve.

The former DUP official called on the northern opposition to renounce violence and hold talks with the government. Opposition leaders based in exile, notably in Egypt and Eritrea, have linked up with the southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which has been fighting successive Khartoum regimes since 1983.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel. 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
14:10	Cartoons
15:00	Global Gardener
15:30	Spell Binder
16:00	Monsters Today
16:30	Border Town
17:00	French Programmes
19:00	News in French
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Neighbours
20:00	Soldier's Diary
20:30	Oraph Winfrey Show
21:10	Spencer For Hire
22:00	News in English
22:30	Land's End
23:15	American Gothic

PRAYER TIMES

04:47	Fajr
06:07	(Sunrise) Doha
12:35	Dhuhr
16:10	'Ar
19:03	Maghreb
20:23	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International

Church Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran

Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical

Church Tel. 688404

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.

654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.

676691.

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin

Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Mild summer conditions will prevail with temperatures rising slightly but remaining below average by 3-4 degrees centigrade and winds north-westerly moderate to active. On Thursday, there will be a gradual rise in temperatures. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

Amman

Aqaba

Deserts

Jordan Valley

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 26, Aqaba 34 Humid-

ity readings: Amman 51 per

cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL

TELEPHONE

NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh

Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain

Dr. Hisham Kan'an

Dr. Khalidoun Asfour

Firas pharmacy

Pardous pharmacy

Al Asema pharmacy

Al Salam pharmacy

Yacoub pharmacy

Shmeisani pharmacy

Nairoukh pharmacy

Najib pharmacy

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir

Al Quds pharmacy

ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Haddad

Khalifeh pharmacy

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre

Civil Defence Department

Civil Defence Immediate

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency

Rescue Police 192, 621111,

637777

Fire Brigade

Blood Bank

Highway Police

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6

Akideh Maternity, 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity

642362

Malhas, J. Amman

Palestine, Shmeisani

Shmeisani Hospital

University Hospital

Al-Mushar Hospital

The Islamic, Abdali

896390

Public Security Department

630321

Local Complaints

Price Complaints

Water and Sewerage

Complaints

Amman Municipality

Complaints

Telephone Information

(directory assistance)

Overseas Calls

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs

Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101

Jordan Television

Radio Jordan

Water Authority

Jordan Electricity Authority

815615

Electric Power Company

636381

RJ Flight Information

53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport

53200

TRAFFIC POLICE

896390

Public Security Department

630321

Local Complaints

Price Complaints

Water and Sewerage

Complaints

Amman Municipality

Complaints

Telephone Information

(directory assistance)

Overseas Calls

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs

Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101

Jordan Television

Radio Jordan

Water Authority

Jordan Electricity Authority

815615

Al-Ahli, Abdali

Al-Ahli, Abdali

Al-Bashir

Army, Marka

Queen Alia Hospital

Regional telecommunications seminar emphasises benefits of privatisation

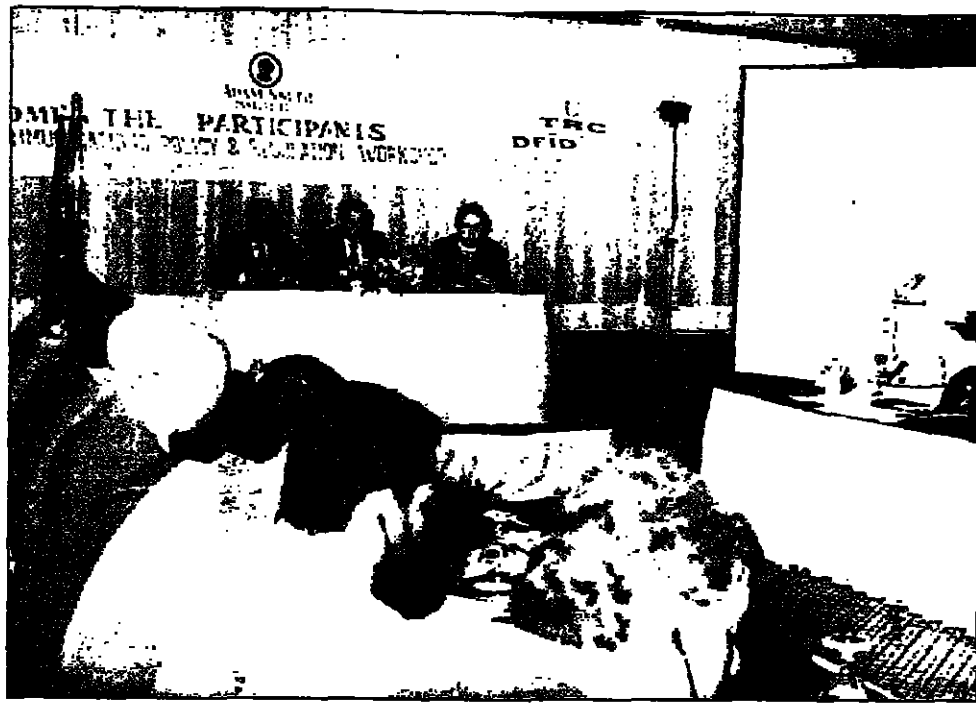
AMMAN (J.T.) — Britain's Ambassador to Jordan, Christopher Bantiscombe, Tuesday opened a seminar and workshop on "Telecommunications policy and regulation" sponsored by the British Government's Department for International Development, a British Embassy press release announced.

This regional workshop was organised by the Adam Smith Institute in association with the Jordanian Telecommunications Regulatory Commission and Price Waterhouse, the statement read.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Bantiscombe spoke about the British Government's experience in the telecommunications sector and the important role that privatisation and modernisation of this sector will play in the development of the Jordanian economy and in economic development in the region as a whole, the statement continued.

"The lessons learned indicate that potential benefits from telecoms modernisation are most likely to be realised with private rather than public investment," Mr. Bantiscombe said.

"The private sector in Britain has demonstrated that it can provide better services more cheaply, to a higher standard. In a sector which is so crucial and which is undergoing so many dramatic changes as telecoms today, governments which fail to modernise risk being left out in the increasingly competi-



The panel at Tuesday's telecommunications conference, organised by the Adam Smith Institute in the U.K., discusses the possible benefits of privatisation for the industry (Petra photo)

tive and global world economy.

"But sector reforms do need careful design, not least to avoid monopoly exploitation by the private sector. This is why liberalisation of world markets needs to go hand in hand with careful public regulation," he said.

Jordan has been one of the leading countries in moving towards modernisation and privatisation of the telecoms sector and in seeking to establish the necessary regulatory framework which goes with this, the statement continued.

The British government takes pride in the contribu-

tion it has made through the bilateral aid programme, working with the Jordanian government to support the restructuring of Jordan's telecoms sector, the release stated.

Over the past three years, the U.K.'s Department for International Development has provided some JD9 million in the form of technical assistance to this project. This has funded both local and U.K. consultancy services in Jordan as well as training in the U.K. for Jordanian officials, the statement continued.

The former TCC has been transformed into the govern-

ment-owned Jordan Telecommunications Company; a Telecoms Regulatory Office is up and running; a Telecoms Policy department is in place; and coordination of the Telecoms Restructuring Project is being handled by a separate Overall Project Management Office within the Ministry of Post and Communications, the press release concluded.

The three-day event will provide an opportunity for participating delegates from Arab countries to learn more about the process of regulating telecommunications in a competitive and privatised market.

Council agrees to allow private sector imports, ending monopoly

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Tuesday announced measures aimed at encouraging private sector traders to import wheat and barley for the local market, an activity that was previously the monopoly of the Ministry of Supply.

A statement following the Cabinet session said the government has authorised the minister of supply to allow private sector merchants to store their imports of wheat at the ministry's silos free of charge for a maximum of

two months, starting September 1997.

The Cabinet announcement said the importers will have to pay a tariff on each sack of wheat at the rate of 250 fils per sack, and stated that the wheat could not be sold to the public for more than JD130 per tonne.

Imported barley will be exempted from the JD5.2 customs duty per tonne, the cabinet added.

During its regular session, the Cabinet formed a delegation, led by Minister of Health and Medical Care

Ashraf Kurdi, to visit Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to study their highly advanced spa centres, institutions offering therapeutic and physiotherapy services, and centres producing vaccines, in order to learn from their expertise.

The Cabinet authorised the minister to sign agreements on cooperation in health-related fields during the visit to Yugoslavia, which starts on Sept. 24, and Bulgaria, which starts on Sept. 28.

The Cabinet formed a delegation, led by Minister of

Foreign Affairs Fayed Tarawneh, to take part in the Arab League Council meetings, which start in Cairo on Sept. 20.

The Cabinet formed a delegation, led by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji, to attend a meeting by the American Travel Agents Association to be held in Scotland on Sept. 6, and formed a delegation, led by Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez, to take part in the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund in Hong Kong on Sept. 23.

Construction of bridge over Jordan underway, other plans sidetracked

AMMAN (Petra) — Work on the construction of a modern bridge to replace the present Sheikh Hussein Bridge across the Jordan River is expected to be completed early in April 1998, Minister of Public Works and Housing Naser Lawzi announced Tuesday.

The Japanese government is funding the project at the cost of 771 million yen (JD4.7 million) as part of its contribution to the Middle East peace process, according to the minister.

The Japanese have also conducted a study on rebuilding the King Hussein Bridge with four lanes, as well as the 8.2-kilometre road leading to

it, also with four lanes, said the minister.

The Japanese government is ready to finance the bridge but work has not started due to questions over the ownership of the bridge on the western side of the river, Mr. Lawzi added.

The German government, through the German Development Bank, has agreed to finance the reconstruction of the King Abdullah and Prince Muhammad bridges on the Jordan River, and the Ministry of Public Works has already conducted preliminary studies on these projects, said Mr. Lawzi.

However, construction of these bridges has not started, since the ownership of these bridges on the western bank of the river is also disputed, he explained.

The government has embarked on the implementation of infrastructure projects in the Kingdom's 13 refugee camps and underdeveloped regions within the overall government-sponsored social safety package, which will be carried out during the next several years at the estimated total cost of JD431 million.

These projects, to be awarded solely to Jordanian contractors, are part of the safety net package, which entails laying mod-

ern infrastructure services in poor areas, including the 13 camps, 28 poor residential areas, and areas controlled by 300 village councils, in addition to helping needy communities start small size income-generating projects, he said.

The Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) will take charge of these projects, in cooperation with the Department of Palestinian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he explained.

The minister said HUDC is currently building 10 housing estates, totalling 2400 units, at an overall cost of JD13 million.

U.N. conference affirms need for standard of human rights

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The United Nations Centre for Human Rights this week convened its four-day meeting in Amman on "Universal Adherence to the Principal International Human Rights Instruments" by calling for a unified standard for human rights.

"Regional cooperation will serve two purposes: the protection of human rights and social peace inside society, and the provision of security and stability between the people," Fayed Tarawneh, Minister of Foreign Affairs said in his opening speech.

In her opening statement, Helga Klein, officer of the High Commission for Human Rights at ESCWA, recited the early works of the U.N., which include numerous declarations by the international community that certain fundamental rights must be respected regardless of a country's political or economic system.

At the 1993 World Conference of Human Rights, the international community strongly reaffirmed the importance of the normative activities in the field of human rights carried out by the General Assembly,

which have provided humanity with standards on which conduct should be based, Ms. Klein said in her speech.

The Secretary General, Kofi Annan, noted in an address in Helsinki two weeks ago that "new manifestations of political intolerance in the world mean that we must stick more than ever to universal human rights principles, and there should be one single standard for judging human rights violations."

"Lack of respect for human rights, under colonial occupation and both in peace and wartime, has meant untold suffering for millions in [the Asia and Pacific] region," she said.

"Fortunately, the struggle for human rights is wellrooted in the region and many nations have succeeded in overcoming a painful past and in building successful economies and new forms of democracy, which hopefully will prompt the countries of this region while maintaining the distinct cultural heritage that is a source of legitimate pride to all nations," she said.

The problems our nations suffer from the most are immigration issues and poverty, Dr. Tarawneh said. On a national level, Jordan

has established a human rights association affiliated with the Prime Ministry, he said.

Over the past half century, the General Assembly has worked towards furthering the domain of protection and deepening the notion of universality, Ms. Vera Azar, an information officer at the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) said.

While the work of codification is continuing, the urgency now is having all states ratify and apply the existing instruments, particularly the seven core treaties: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Ms. Azar explained.

"I look forward to an active exchange of views in the coming days to gain a better understanding of the unique contribution of the human rights treaties and of the importance of moving as rapidly as possible toward their universal ratification and application," Ms. Klein concluded.

Jordan is one of the countries in the region that has always shown its concern toward human rights and works dealing with international and regional cooperation, Dr. Tarawneh said.

A Royal Decree has ordered the establishment of a national committee, The Centre of Freedom, Democracy and Human Rights Research, to monitor all aspects concerning human rights in Jordan, he added.

"This centre aims at intensifying the principles of freedom and democracy in the Kingdom in voiced and scientific aspects, and to fight all offensive acts on people and racism," he explained.

The meeting ended with Dr. Tarawneh welcoming all guests and saying, "I am sure that our nations were brought up with noble beliefs that can ensure our success in such meetings and provide compact principles for protecting human rights in our countries."

Arid farming conference opens

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Agriculture Mijthem Khursha Tuesday opened a five-day international conference dealing with agriculture in dry areas by highlighting the need for modern technology to increase agricultural output.

The administrators and researchers of scientific centres need to exert efforts to overcome problems facing the inhabitants of arid regions through the utilisation of modern technology, said the minister, who deputised for HRH Crown Prince Hassan at the opening session.

The conference, entitled "Agricultural Growth, Sustainable Resource Management, and Poverty Alleviation in Low Rainfall Areas of West Asia and North Africa," has drawn 60 participants from eight Mashreq-Maghreb regions, including Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia.

The government has been giving due attention to dry regions, which account for 91 per cent of the total area of the Kingdom, he said.

These areas, home to 70 per cent of the country's livestock on which some 400,000 people depend for a livelihood, are receiving attention in the course of promoting rural development and retaining the natural balance, he explained.

These regions, which suffer from rapid deterioration of natural resources due to natural and human pressures, require prompt attention so that they can provide sustainable development and boost agricultural production, Mr. Khursha said.

The broad goal of the conference is to contribute towards balanced agricultural growth and food security in the eight countries through the participatory formulation of strategies for sustainable resource management and poverty alleviation, he said.

The organisers of the conference include the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Jordanian National Centre for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer, the International Food Policy Institute, and the German Foundation for International Development.

Court postpones murder trial to review case against father

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Tuesday postponed the case of Mazen Masri, a 34-year-old father who reportedly confessed to murdering his two children in the Shmeisani neighbourhood of Amman last September, to further review the case.

The court, which adjourned after a 45-day attorneys' vacation, stated that the court was still reviewing the case of the defendant and set Sept. 16 as the new date to either issue a verdict or further examine the case.

Mr. Masri faces two charges of premeditated murder and three charges of attempted murder.

A judicial source told the Jordan Times that the delay in issuing the verdict stems from the recent reshuffling of judges, "and the new judges who were

assigned recently to the case still need more time to review it."

Mr. Masri allegedly told authorities that he had poisoned his two children, Hanin, nine, and Hani, six, by administering two cyanide pills to them before work on the morning of Sept. 11, 1996.

But in January of this year, Mr. Masri, who pleaded not guilty, retracted his previous confessions in court and claimed that he fabricated his statements to the police to avert psychological pressure exerted against him by the authorities.

He further alleged that he decided to "confess to something I did not commit because the authorities threatened to substitute my wife and parents, instead of myself, for questioning."

Mr. Masri also reportedly confessed to an earlier murder attempt of his wife

and two children. According to the charge sheet, Mr. Masri began experiencing domestic trouble three months after his 1987 marriage and financial constraints following his second child's birth.

In his Sept. 25 confession, he blamed his 32-year-old wife, Hiam Hamoudeh, for these problems, claiming that she was extravagant and refused to aid him in the business which he established in 1991.

The two children were found incapacitated in the apartment by their mother on the morning of the incident.

Ms. Hamoudeh had left her children home alone to give her husband a ride to work.

Hani was declared dead on arrival, while Hanin died shortly after being admitted to the hospital.



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Tuesday meets with representatives of two visiting delegations representing 33 churches. He expressed hope that they could influence the peace process (Petra photo)

Prime minister meets with church groups

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali today will address a press conference, to be held at Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, on local, pan-Arab and regional issues.

In another development, Dr. Majali Tuesday met with two visiting delegations representing 33 churches from the Middle East Council of

Churches and the National Council for American Churches to discuss developments in the Middle East peace process and the obstacles which it faces.

He said Jordan has always worked for establishing a lasting peace between the followers of the three monotheistic religions.

Dr. Majali stressed the

WHAT'S GOING ON

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER '97 FESTIVAL

- * Paintings by Rafa Nasiri of Iraq, Ziad Dalloul of Syria, and Najia Mehadji at the South Hall.
- * Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Qailoka at the Middle Hall.
- * Sculpture, drawings, and paintings by Jordanian artist Rajwa Ali.
- * Works by contemporary Arab artists at the Blue House.
- * Paintings by children of Zarqa reflecting on the problem of pollution at the Byzantine church.

PLAY

- * Children's play — "How to Recover Our Names" at the Royal Cultural Centre, at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- * Display of caricature drawings by Naji Al 'Ali at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 6.
- * Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Sept. 9.
- * Works by Basem Al Mahdi at the Jordan Plastic Art Association Gallery, Jabal Weibden, until Sept. 8.

19 scholars awarded scholarships to study in U.K.

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nineteen Jordanians have been awarded Chevening Scholarship from the British Embassy for the academic year 1997-1998. They will have the opportunity to pursue their postgraduate studies or professional training in the U.K. in a wide range of fields, including politics, media studies, law, economics, finance, business administration, and development studies, a British embassy press release announced Tuesday.

The Chevening scholarship programme was set up in 1982 to allow the brightest and the best of each generation to study for their Masters degree in Britain. Since then almost 250 Jordanian students have been awarded scholarships, the statement continued.

Fifteen of this year's scholars (the remaining four had already left for Britain to start their courses) met for a pre-

departure session earlier this month, where the British Ambassador Christopher Bantiscombe, and the British Council Director David Burton, welcomed them. Mr. Bantiscombe outlined the aims of the scheme and hoped that the scholars would be able to use their experience and knowledge upon their return to Jordan for the benefit of the country, the press release said.

Applications for Chevening scholarships for the academic year 1998/99 will be available from the British Embassy and the British Council for interested candidates in mid-October. The scheme is open to all Jordanian applicants who hold an undergraduate degree and would like to study for their Masters in Britain. Applicants must have good written and spoken English, the statement concluded.

NATO hands over control of TV transmitter to Bosnian Serb police

UDRIGOVO (AFP) — U.S. troops guarding a key television transmitter in Bosnia handed it over to six hard-line Bosnian Serb police early Tuesday after securing a deal guaranteeing its broadcasts, a U.S. Army colonel said.

Hardline Bosnian Serbs who had attacked the 60 U.S. troops guarding the transmitter in this northeastern area Monday, left at dawn Tuesday after seeing the six police take control of the transmitter.

The U.S. troops surrendered the transmitter after the hardline mayor of the nearby town of Bijeljina agreed to allow rival television stations to broadcast over the area, Colonel Montagu Winfield said.

But the U.S. troops remained around the transmitter, setting up a barbed wire fence around the area and flattening the earth around the tower.

The move came as leading

Serb hardliner, Monticilo Krajisnik offered to meet his arch-rival, Serb President Biljana Plavsic, for talks he said had been negotiated by Serb Orthodox Patriarch Pavle, the Bosnian Serb news agency SRNA reported.

Col. Winfield told AFP that the troops guarding the transmitter, one of several key transmitters being protected by NATO forces, had agreed to hand over the facility to the Serb police.

This was on condition that the television station supportive of Ms. Plavsic, currently engaged in a power struggle with the hardliners in Serb-run parts of Bosnia, be allowed to share it for broadcasts, he added.

Under the agreement, reached in the early hours with the Bijeljina mayor and the Bosnian Serb minister for the media, an international television service would also be allowed to make broadcasts, Col. Win-

field said. The "Bijeljina mayor and RS media minister came and an agreement was reached during the night. It was a peaceful meeting. We shared food with them, we gave them water. Everything went smoothly," he said.

The U.S. troops guarding the transmitter came under a hail of stones from a large group of hostile civilians Monday. Overnight the demonstration settled into a standoff.

The troops, part of the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) enforcing the peace settlement in Bosnia, were deployed around the transmitter last Thursday to prevent clashes between supporters of the two camps struggling to wrest control of the Serb-run half of Bosnia.

Control of the broadcast media in this largely rural country is a powerful political weapon which was heavily relied on by the Serb

hardliners during the Bosnian war.

Bijeljina sits in a part of the territory controlled by hardliners. Ms. Plavsic is based in the western town of Banja Luka.

Meanwhile Mr. Krajisnik told SRNA a meeting with Ms. Plavsic had been agreed.

The talks, aimed at bringing to an end the power struggle which has wracked the Serb-run region in Bosnia, would be held Wednesday in the northeastern Bosnian town of Bijeljina, close to the border with Serbia, Mr. Krajisnik said, quoted by the agency.

The patriarchy "has informed me that Ms. Plavsic has promised Patriarch Pavle to meet me on September 3 at Bijeljina," he told SRNA.

Ms. Plavsic's office in Banja Luka however refused to comment on the proposal.



Mexico's President Ernesto Zedillo shakes hands with opposition PRD Congress Chairman Porfirio Muñoz Ledo before delivering his state of the nation speech Monday, which for the first time was to a congress not dominated by the PRI party (Reuter photo)

Mexico opposition changes political rules

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Opposition leaders called Monday's opening session of the new Mexican Congress an historic occasion because the ruling party no longer commands an absolute majority in the lower house.

On Sunday, the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) grudgingly recognised the opposition-designated congressional leadership, defusing a potentially serious political crisis ahead of the opening session.

Carlos Medina Plascencia, congressional leader of the conservative National Action Party (PAN), said Monday's session marked "a new era in the political life of Mexico" featuring "plurality and tolerance."

Pablo Gomez, a representative of the centre-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), hailed "the start, at last, of a transition in Mexico toward a democracy with the solution to one

of the nation's biggest problems — a balance of power."

Jorge Emilio Gonzalez Torres of the tiny Green Party (PVEM) said "the legislative branch has regained its dignity thanks to the opposition."

Until the July 6 mid term vote — in which the four main opposition parties together won a majority of chamber of deputy seats — the PRI-dominated lower house was little more than a rubber stamp for the president.

But opposition parties — which together have 261 deputies to the PRI's 239 — chose the chamber's leadership Saturday without the PRI, a move the PRI initially called illegal.

The opposition block also claimed the right to respond to President Ernesto Zedillo's state of the nation address to Monday's joint session of congress, a privilege traditionally reserved for a ranking PRI lawmaker who invariably lauded the presi-

dent and his policies.

PRI lawmakers initially threatened to boycott the annual address but finally acknowledged the congressional leadership and accepted that Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, a move the PRI initially called illegal.

Mr. Zedillo welcomed the PRI's acceptance of the lawmakers' decision, saying they acted "in the higher interest of Mexico and its institutions (and with a sense of responsibility)."

But the about-face came painfully for many hardliners in the PRI — which has controlled national politics since 1929. Mexico's increasingly energised opposition, called the "Group of Four," is led by the two largest opposition parties, the PRD and the PAN. The Green Party and leftist Workers Party also joined to give the alliance 261 seats to the PRI's 239.

3 die, 2 hurt in Mexico border shooting

CIUDAD JUAREZ (R) — A heavily armed man shot and killed three people and wounded two others in a sidewalk attack Sunday night, the latest in a string of murders to hit this drug-plagued Mexican border city.

Police said Monday that the gunman jumped out of a white car with an assault rifle and fired about 30 shots along the sidewalk. He was accompanied by at least two other men and they sped away when he jumped back into the car.

One of the dead and both of the injured were U.S. citizens, the government news agency Notimex reported. The attack took place outside a restaurant-bar called Geronimo's and just across the street from a fashionable restaurant, where six people were killed last month in a mafia-style attack blamed on a turf battle between

drug traffickers.

Ciudad Juarez, which lies across the border from El Paso, Texas, is the base of operations for the so-called Juarez Cartel, whose alleged leader Amado Carrillo Fuentes died after plastic surgery in Mexico City on July 4.

Authorities on both sides of the border have blamed the recent violence on rivals fighting over Carrillo Fuentes' former turf.

Police investigators interviewed witnesses Monday but said that, while the latest murders bore the characteristics of a drug-related attack, it was still too early to tell for sure.

"We don't have any information linking this to drug trafficking, or to what happened" at the restaurant, said Ernesto Garcia, a spokesman for the Chihuahua state police.

One of the victims was

Jose Ignacio Guzman Nieblas, 32, the brother of Miss Mexico 1996 Vanessa Guzman, but it was not clear if he was the intended target.

Another victim was Carlos Valnana, 29, a U.S. citizen and student at the University of Texas-El Paso.

His brother, Alejandro Valdana, 30, and Tony Cole, 36, was one of the two wounded.

The other dead man was identified as Rancher Jose Elias Carrillo Aun, 29. Earlier Sunday evening, government officials, business leaders and human rights groups joined thousands of people in a "peace march" called to protest the wave of violence that has killed more than 20 people here since Carrillo's death.

Four doctors were recently murdered and their bodies dumped together on the side of a road in Juarez.

'U.S. military seeks test of laser'

NEW YORK (R) — The developers of America's most powerful military laser are seeking to conduct its first test by firing it at an air force satellite in space, the New York Times reported Monday.

The Times said permission to use the laser, which is located at the White Sands Missile Range in the New Mexico desert and is run by the army, would have to come

from the Secretary of Defense, probably after conferring with the White House.

The Pentagon had no immediate comment on the Times report.

The Times quoted experts as saying the test would not break any law, but arms control advocates said it would likely set off a race for better space weapons.

The \$60 million satellite is run by the air force, which

planned to shut it down because it was no longer needed. But the maker of the satellite, Spectrum Astro of Gilbert, Arizona, said it still had a useful life, the Times said.

The September test, if approved, would be a boost in the development of a weapon that could demolish satellites and other spacecraft, the newspaper reported.

New Hong Kong chief pledges to strengthen ties in first overseas visits

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong's chief executive Tung Chee-hwa pledged Tuesday the territory would take an active role in international affairs as he prepares for his first official overseas trip.

Mr. Tung leaves for Malaysia and Singapore Wednesday, before travelling to the United States, Japan and Europe.

After a weekly meeting with his cabinet — the Executive Council — the territory's head told reporters he would use the trip "to emphasise Hong Kong's international role, and to pledge the active role we will play in financial affairs."

"I will also use the opportunity to introduce Hong Kong's latest economic development, and I hope more investors will come to invest in Hong Kong," he

said. The trip will "strengthen bilateral cooperation," he added.

Mr. Tung became the territory's first head after the July 1 handover from British to Chinese sovereignty. "Hong Kong is running smoothly after the handover," he said.

"We feel proud to be able to return to China. We are full of confidence for the future."

In Kuala Lumpur, Mr. Tung will hold talks with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, while in Singapore, he will meet Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Meanwhile, a survey carried out by Hong Kong's mass circulation Chinese-language Apple Daily newspaper, found 78.3 per cent of people here thought Mr.

Tung's trip would enhance Hong Kong's international status.

Only 10 per cent, of the 599 questioned, disagreed. On his trip to Washington and New York from Sept. 9 to 11, Mr. Tung is expected to meet U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington, his spokesman said earlier.

"He looks forward to seeing the president," the spokesman said. "Both parties have a wish to see each other. They are working out details."

"Mr. Tung will be going there to see people and tell them everything has gone well since the handover and it is business as usual," the spokesman added.

"The trips are to renew ties with these countries. They have been very important trading partners and there are cultural and other links."

Japanese historian pessimistic about future

TOKYO (AFP) — A Japanese historian who won a symbolic legal victory last week against government censorship of school textbooks said Tuesday he was pessimistic about future approaches to addressing Japan's wartime past.

"At this moment in time, I'm rather pessimistic," retired professor Saburo Ienaga told a news conference, following the Supreme Court's ruling that the Japanese Education Ministry had illegally attempted to alter his books.

"I don't think things are going well objectively," the 83-year-old said, pointing to recent moves by some academics to question the accounts of women who provided sexual services to Japanese soldiers during World War II.

Mr. Ienaga, who turns 84 Wednesday, first sued the government in 1965 and filed another two suits in subsequent years.

On Friday last week, the Supreme Court ruled that the government illegally tried to change four out of seven passages he had written, awarding the elderly academic symbolic damages of 400,000 yen (\$3,400).

Among his descriptions of Japanese war atrocities was a brief account of a notorious germ warfare unit in China which conducted deadly experiments on human prisoners. The Education Ministry sought the removal of any reference to so-called Unit 731, arguing that there was "no credible scholarly research."

Mr. Ienaga said he was "not that dissatisfied" with the ruling which he described as "partially satisfactory" and said he was particularly "satisfied and relieved" that screening of the Unit 731 passage had been found illegal.

During his 32-year battle with Japanese authorities, Mr. Ienaga said he was not seeking a ruling that he was right and the Education Ministry was wrong.

Karabakh Armenians elect new leader

STEPANAKERT (AFP) — Arkady Ghukasyan has won the presidential election in Nagorno-Karabakh, a separatist ethnic-Armenian enclave of Azerbaijan, officials said Tuesday.

Ghukasyan, 40, won 89.3 per cent of Monday's vote. Electoral Commission Chairman Grigory Ogandzhanyan said. He had previously served as the self-declared republic's foreign minister and chief negotiator.

Turnout in the election, branded as illegal by Azerbaijan's government, was 84.4 per cent of registered voters, Mr. Ogandzhanyan said.

The two other contenders, Boris Arushanyan and Artur Tovmazyan won 5.35 and 5.3 per cent of the vote respectively.

Nagorno-Karabakh, a rugged stretch of land at the centre of a decade-long war between Azeris and Armenians, elected the new president Monday despite foreign pressure to abandon the poll.

The region, populated by ethnic Armenians, was under the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan during the Soviet period but broke away and declared its intention to be annexed to Armenia as the Communist superpower

unravelling in the late 1980s.

Earlier a spokesman for the Election Commission said about 75 per cent of voters supported Mr. Ghukasyan, according to early partial returns, leaving little hope for the two other candidates.

Some 35,000 people died in protracted conflict over Karabakh before a ceasefire deal was signed in 1994. Azerbaijan seeks to regain control over Karabakh. It accuses Armenia of standing behind the separatists.

Mr. Ghukasyan has dismissed as completely unacceptable a peace plan proposed by a group of Western countries and Russia, acting as mediators.

The latest in a long line of failed proposals calls for Karabakh to be given wide autonomy but technically remain part of Azerbaijan.

Foreign peacekeepers would be deployed around Karabakh to ensure the region's security.

The Karabakh forces would have to give up a large buffer zone they have conquered around the perimeter of the unrecognised state but could continue using a land bridge they won linking themselves and Armenia proper.

But Mr. Ghukasyan said on the eve of the poll that the

region would never return to Azeri rule and would not recognise Azeri territorial integrity.

"We cannot accept this proposal, because it represents the position of Azerbaijan. There is no expression of the position of Nagorno-Karabakh."

"So far the proposals are leading more towards war than peace, because one side in the conflict is absolutely unsatisfied with the peace talks," he told reporters.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a friendship and cooperation accord Friday.

It calls for the two countries to offer military support to each other if they feel threatened.

Azerbaijan, struggling to absorb nearly a million refugees and displaced people from the conflict, has accused Russia of supporting Armenians during the war.

Observers say increased pressure to resolve the conflict is in no small measure due to more than \$30 billion that Baku has secured in long-term investment from foreign firms in developing its big offshore Caspian Sea oil reserves.

Use economics to fight Southeast Asian haze, expert says

SINGAPORE (R) — Economics, not water, should be the prime weapon in the fight to control forest fires that rage through Indonesia each year and shroud the nation and its neighbours in a polluting haze, a forestry expert told Reuters.

"Sending out firemen and planes full of water will not put these fires out," said Jeff Sayer, director general of the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia.

"The way to stop the recurrence of these fires is to change the economics of the region and improve the process of development," he said in a telephone interview.

Water-bombing strategic tracts of burning forest in Sumatra and Borneo from the air was the heart of a plan devised last week by senior officials from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Seeding clouds to provoke rain was also mooted.

The plan has yet to be given the go-ahead by the governments of these four nations, the worst hit by fires set to clear land for development in Indonesia, but which rage uncon-

trollably.

Commentators say fires on the scale of this year have not been seen since the great forest fire of Borneo in 1982-83 that devastated 33,000 square kilometres of land.

Haze is not solely a product of Indonesia's burning forests, but also a result of pollutants from factories and vehicles.

Declaring a national disaster, traffic-choked Malaysia has sought to tighten emission rules and is restricting the number of cars admitted to Kuala Lumpur as part of a haze action plan.

"We have a lot of emissions in Malaysia anyway and when you get to a certain threshold you will get haze. Even without the fires we're not far from that threshold," said Loh Chi Leong, senior science officer at the Malaysian Nature Society.

"But until we figure out what the relative contribution of each factor is to the haze, it will be impossible to take the appropriate corrective action," he told Reuters Tuesday.

Indonesia's carbon emissions grew at 38.8 per cent between 1990 and 1995, say figures from U.S.-based World-

watch Institute.

Singapore is part of a four-nation group spearheading the global drive to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions — born out of 1992's Earth summit in Rio De Janeiro — by encouraging greener industrial processes.

Industrial pollutants cause phenomenon like acid rain. High levels of lead belched out by motor vehicles are known to be dangerous, especially to children.

Singapore has stepped up its air quality monitoring from every 24 hours to every three hours and, along with Malaysia and Indonesia, has issued warnings about exercising outdoors. The pall of smoke also ignites economic losses.

Indonesia's Environment Ministry estimates about 30 million cubic metres of forest are destroyed by fire every year, causing losses of 240 trillion rupiah (\$84 billion).

The haze led Kuala Lumpur to close its airport briefly this month, and there have been closures of Indonesian airports.

Shipping traffic has also been hit by poor visibility. But environmentalists are not confident that slash and burn practices can be halted in rapidly expanding Indonesia

where big companies hungry to make profits and farmers who are simply hungry use fire as the fastest means of clearing land.

Climatic conditions compound the problem. A Jakarta official said fires in Kalimantan and Sumatra's Riau Archipelago, just across from Singapore and peninsula Malaysia, were worsened by a drought caused by the El Nino weather system which disrupts global weather patterns.

Meteorologists say this year's El Nino — estimated to have already caused at least \$13 billion in economic damage — could be the worst this century.

Trees not suited to withstand extremes of drought like those in Indonesian rain forests are tinderbox dry, leaving vast areas critically exposed to and easily consumed by fire.

The flames and the smoke produced by the burning timber are fuelled by the natural oils in the trees.

"Once you get to a certain threshold for drought, then you've got a real problem on your hands. We're getting close to that threshold," Mr. Sayer said.

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Early amnesty ruled out for S. Korea's Roh, Chun

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam Tuesday ruled out an immediate amnesty for his two jailed predecessors and analysts said confusion over the issue reflected a crisis in the ruling camp.

Mr. Kim was responding to a suggestion by Lee Hoi-Chang, the ruling New Korea Party candidate for presidential elections in December, that he grant clemency to Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo within two weeks.

Both were jailed for mutiny, treason and corruption.

"President Kim believes any amnesty for Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh requires a public consensus," a presidential aide said.

"The president will probably grant them amnesty before his term expires, but he made it very clear that he had no plans to do so any time soon," he added.

Mr. Kim, barred from seeking reelection, is due to end his five-year term in February.

An amnesty for Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh would be popular among conservative voters in their electoral crucial home regions. Political analysts said Mr. Lee's suggestion to rush through a clemency smacked of desperation ahead of the elections.

"This reflects the atmosphere of crisis overwhelming the ruling camp," said Shin Jung-Hyun, political science professor at Kyunghee University.

"They fear that they might lose power in the upcoming presidential elections."

Prof. Shin noted that for the first time ever a ruling party candidate was trailing an opposition candidate in opinion polls in the run-up to an election.

Several polls show Kim Dae-Jung of the main opposition National Congress for New Politics leading Mr. Lee by between seven and eight percentage points.

The Supreme Court in April upheld a lower Appeals Court decision to commute Mr. Chun's death sentence to life in jail and Mr. Roh's 22-1/2 year prison term to 17 years.

They had been found guilty of staging a coup in 1979 that thrust then-army General Chun into power and of leading an army massacre the following year in the southwestern city of Kwangju that crushed democratic opposition.

The two were also convicted of taking bribes worth hundreds of millions of dollars while in office.

"It is obvious that Mr. Lee did not consult with the president, who has the power to pardon criminals," said Prof. Shin.

Mr. Lee, a former Supreme Court judge, was once seen as a strong candidate for the presidency, but his popularity plunged after opposition parties alleged his two sons deliberately lost weight to avoid mandatory military service.

Mr. Lee has acknowledged the sons were exempted from the 30-month service because they were underweight, but he denied they deliberately slimmed down.

PARKES
Tanzania
to push for
tighter
Burundi
sanctions

Case
about

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Dead
plan

Tanzania to push for tighter Burundi sanctions

DAR ES SALAAM (R) — Tanzania will push for tighter sanctions against Burundi's military-led regime at a summit this week when mediator Julius Nyerere may offer his resignation, sources in the region said.

"I'm sure the summit might come up with much more stringent measures, a total blockade, political and economic, to bring them (Burundi's government) back to negotiations," a senior Tanzania official told Reuters.

Tanzania has called a summit of regional heads of state in Dar Es Salaam Wednesday to review Burundi policy 13 months after they imposed economic and political sanctions.

The Tanzanian Foreign Ministry official, who declined to be identified, said Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia had so far confirmed their participation.

He said the summit might also seek U.N. endorsement for the sanctions imposed after the coup by the Tutsi army in July last year which installed Major Pierre Buyoya as president.

The ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis has claimed up to 150,000 lives in the small landlocked nation since 1993.

The future role of African elder statesman, Julius Nyerere, a former Tanzanian president, as the main international mediator on Burundi was uncertain Monday.

The weekly East African newspaper said Mr. Nyerere would offer to resign at the summit because he and Tanzania had lost the confidence of Buyoya as "honest brokers."

A Burundian envoy confirmed that view in Nairobi Monday, accusing Tanzania of helping Hutu refugees strike into Burundi from camps on the border with annexation in mind.

Energy Minister Bernard Barandereka told a news conference deteriorating relations between the two countries were the result of "Tanzania's desperate efforts to achieve (its) long-held ambition of annexing Burundi."

Tanzania, with one of Africa's most experienced armies, accuses Burundi of planning to invade to close the Hutu camps. Burundi's army is almost overwhelmingly recruited from the Tutsi minority and some senior diplomats say it has expanded hugely under Mr. Buyoya.

A senior Western diplomat also told Reuters he expected Mr. Nyerere to offer his resignation at the summit but predicted that regional leaders would refuse, strengthening his hand.

Diplomats said Tanzanian efforts to tighten the leaky blockade — at least on paper — may win support from Uganda, Rwanda and, if it attends, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

But Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi may resist any harsher measures against Burundi.

Mr. Arap Moi softened Kenyan sanctions at the last Burundi summit in April and Kenyan officials told Reuters last month they were confused by Tanzanian policy on Burundi.

The sanctions are ineffective because they are widely breached, not least by Tanzanian companies supplying petroleum, the officials said.

Mr. Barandereka praised Mr. Arap Moi's role. Burundian diplomats said he would deliver a message to the Kenyan government from Maj. Buyoya while in the Kenyan capital.

He said Burundi had not received an invitation to the summit from President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania.

Mr. Nyerere was angered when the Burundi government refused to attend peace talks with Hutu leaders in the Tanzanian town of Arusha last week, hastening the collapse of the forum.



Cuban President Fidel Castro waves to followers as he arrives at a ceremony to mark the start of a new school year on the communist-ruled Caribbean island Monday. Mr. Castro, who had stayed out of public view for more than three weeks, joked about recent rumours of his death, saying his enemies frequently tried to kill him off early (Reuters photo)

Castro reappears, jokes about death rumours

HAVANA (R) — Cuba's President Fidel Castro, who had stayed out of public view for more than three weeks, reappeared Monday and joked about recent rumours of his death, saying his enemies frequently tried to "kill him off" early.

The 71-year-old Cuban leader, wearing his familiar olive-green cap and uniform, endured a soaking from heavy rain when he turned out to speak at a ceremony to mark the start of a new school year on the Communist-ruled Caribbean island.

Mr. Castro, whose absence from public view for more than three weeks had generated a storm of rumours last week suggesting he might be either very sick or dead, appeared well and even joked about the rain, advising those who had a cold to go home.

As the driving rainwater darkened his cap and uniform, he stayed put in front of the microphones to finish his speech, quipping at one stage: "It's a sabotage by the rain." But, clearly relishing his public reappearance, he directed his sharpest jibes at those "imperialists" whom he said were hoping he would die and that Cuba's "revolution" — its one-party socialist system — would die with him. "Say, good-bye to your hopes, imperialists," he said.

He added, drawing applause with a joking reference to the recent rumours of his death: "They keep on trying to 'kill' us off from time to time." The rumours of his death had circulated most strongly in Miami, the home of some of his bitterest political enemies among the Cuban exile community.

"We all have to die one day," the Cuban leader said, but, keeping up his joking style, he suggested that when it eventually did happen the Cuban authorities might have some trouble convincing people that it was true.

Adopting a more serious tone, he said that even when his generation, the architects of the 1959 revolution in Cuba, were dead and gone, new generations of Cubans would take their place "inspired by the work and history of the revolution."

Mr. Castro said he and others would defend the revolution "to the last breath, to the last minute." He finished his speech with his usual defiant slogan "homeland or death, socialism or death, we will win."

Cuba's Foreign Ministry had already dismissed last week as "lies" the flurry of rumours suggesting he was either dead or ill. A ministry spokeswoman said Thursday the president was in an "excellent state of health."

The rumours had been widely carried by Spanish Language TV and radio stations in Miami, but the speculation had also been echoed by media in Latin America and elsewhere.

The rumours about his health had intensified after Mr. Castro had disappeared from public sight since early August.

His last known appearance in public was on Aug. 5 and Cuban television had shown footage of him chatting with visiting trade unionists on Aug. 9, but he had failed to make any public appearance when he turned 71 on Aug. 13.

In appearances in late July, he had sometimes seemed tired and slow moving. He last gave a major speech on April 4.

Death toll from Guam plane crash rises to 228

SEOUL (R) — Two more survivors of last month's crash of a Korean Air Lines Jumbo Jet in Guam have died, bringing the death toll in the tragedy to 228, a South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tuesday.

One other survivor is still fighting for his life at a U.S. military hospital, the spokesman said.

Another South Korean, Jung Young-Hak, a passenger on the flight, died Sunday in the same facility.

On Aug. 6, Korea Air Lines Flight 801, carrying 254 people, mostly South Korean holiday makers,

ploughed into a hillside near Guam's International Airport and burst into flames.

Among 26 remaining survivors from the Boeing 747 wreckage are three Americans, one Japanese and one New Zealander. The rest are South Koreans, according to airline officials.

Officials of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) have said preliminary examination of the engines, the wreckage and flight recorders showed that the plane was in full control on a steady descent and the crew was not aware of any impending disaster.

The NTSB, which is also looking into the possibility that an unusually heavy downpour and sudden loss of visibility could have contributed to the crash, has not determined a cause.

Cambodia government sidesteps king's proposal

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The Cambodian government Tuesday sidestepped King Norodom Sihanouk's proposal for peace talks to end factional fighting, formally delivering him a lengthy but vague letter that did not appear to directly address the issue.

The carefully-worded three page letter, delivered to the monarch in the northern town of Siem Reap, hinted that peace talks could only be held if forces loyal to deposed co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh gave up their struggle.

In addition, the letter, signed by powerful Second Prime Minister Hun Sen and Prince Ranariddh's replacement, Foreign Minister Ung Huot, asked that the king — the prince's father — meet with troops who had "defected" from the prince to the government side before any talks be held.

"In order to increase confidence, if there is a request (for peace talks) we wish (you) to give permission to

your children who have decided to stop fighting and have returned back to the motherland to see you ..." the letter said.

The letter also recalled that the government had appealed to the prince's men to lay down their weapons in early August and return to the positions they had before the fighting began.

"They will not be punished or sentenced but until now, except for some officers and soldiers who have returned, we have not received any answer to our request," the premiers wrote.

They added the only people who faced charges were Prince Ranariddh himself and two of his top commanders Nhek Bun Chhay, former deputy chief of the armed forces Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Serey Kosol, the former deputy governor of northwest Battambang province.

"The future of Prince Ranariddh and the two generals will be completely based on the decision of the court

which has charged them already in accordance with existing laws which no one can violate," the letter said.

Analysts said they thought the letter was an attempt to split the ranks of the resistance loyal to the prince and not a serious response to the king's peace talks proposal.

"There doesn't appear to be even a hint of conciliatory language in this letter," said one diplomat. "Hun Sen has obviously taken a hard line and wants the prince isolated."

"It doesn't look like he has any interest in talking to Ranariddh or anyone else unless they surrender first."

On Sunday, King Sihanouk appealed to the warring parties, now fighting over the prince's last bastion on the Thai border, to call a ceasefire and enter into peace talks with him as a "referee."

The prince has accepted the offer, but Mr. Hun Sen, who controls the vast majority of the country, has remained cool to the pro-

posal. Meanwhile, Prince Ranariddh's aides said Wednesday the prince will relaunch a road-show aimed at drumming up world support against Mr. Hun Sen.

The prince will set off on a trip to Europe, Asia and the United States Wednesday during which he will lobby for support against his ouster and address the U.N. General Assembly.

"The prince will speak at the 52nd meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in New York late this month about the situation in Cambodia," a close aide from his cabinet in exile said Tuesday.

The prince will outline human rights abuses in Cambodia and stress he was illegally toppled and replaced by his rival co-premier during the trip, other sources said.

He is expected to ask governments with diplomatic representation in Phnom Penh to withdraw their ambassadors in a sign of pro-

test against Mr. Hun Sen's seizure of sole power, the sources said.

The prince will also meet with U.S. congressmen and senators as well as members of the U.S. Cambodian community during his trip to the U.S. which will begin on Sept. 14 and last up to two weeks, aides revealed.

But the French-educated prince's first stop will be Paris, where he will fly when he leaves the Thai capital where he has spent the past few weeks.

From France, where the prince has a home and a teaching post at a French university, he will travel to "somewhere in Europe" as part of his mission, the aide said, without specifying where.

He will then fly back to Asia in late September or early October for an audience with the Sultan of Brunei to discuss strife-torn Cambodia's political climate, before he travels to Malaysia for meetings with officials there.

China top advisor says political reform needed

BEIJING (R) — A top advisor to China's Communist Party chief, Jiang Zemin issued a call Tuesday for more political reform to satisfy rising popular demand to voice opinions as economic reforms raise living standards.

"The continued rapid development of China's economy is safeguarded by reform of the political structure," Liu Ji said in an interview with the China News Service.

"Otherwise the consequences are unimaginable," Mr. Liu was quoted as saying in some of the most open and daring remarks in recent years on the need for political change.

Beijing effectively dropped plans by late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to introduce changes to China's totalitarian system amid fears of more unrest after student demonstrations in 1989 ended in bloodshed in Tiananmen Square.

Mr. Liu echoed a speech by Mr. Jiang last May — only parts of which were made public — urging political reform. The phrase had been virtually taboo for years because of the echoes it conjured up of moves toward liberalisation in the late 1980s coupled with memories of the ill-fated 1989 student demonstrations.

Mr. Liu appeared undeterred by such qualms, saying political reform was in tune with the times and was essential if China was to keep its increasingly well-off and better-educated people happy.

"When the people have enough food to eat and enough clothes to keep warm and as cultural standards increase, they will then want to express their opinions," said Mr. Liu, vice president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China's premier think tank.

"The people wanting to take part in political thinking is a good thing, it is a sign of the prosperity and strength of the nation and is also a tide of the age that cannot be turned back," he said.

"If the Communist Party is really a party that serves the people, that stands in the vanguard of the present age, then it must find new means and measures to satisfy this demand of the people," said Mr. Liu.

"Because of this, when the 15th (Communist) Party congress pushes with advances in socialist construction, at the same time as making breakthroughs in the economic field, we must push forward socialist democracy, and advance reform of the political system," he said.

Congo closes down river crossings amid fighting

KINSHASA (AFP) — The Congolese government has closed the main remaining ports for traffic from the capital Brazzaville to Kinshasa on the other side of the Congo River, state radio reported amid heavy fighting Tuesday.

The decision to shut down the Main Bleue and Case De Gaulle quays in southern Brazzaville's Baongo district was made late Monday, the radio said, without giving any reason, but one independent source indicated that it was a tactical military move.

The ports had been used by residents fleeing fierce fighting between forces loyal to President Pascal Lissouba and the militia of former military ruler Denis Sassou Nguesso.

In Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the artillery battles across the river could be clearly heard for days on end, a brief lull in the fighting was noted Tuesday morning after heavy gunfire.

An independent source reached from Kinshasa told AFP that the river crossings had apparently been closed for security reasons, for fear of "infiltration" by General

Sassou Nguesso's "Cobra" militia.

A military source close to the former ruler told AFP that Mr. Lissouba had asked Brazzaville mayor Bernard Kolelas, who controls most of the south of the capital, to link forces with his own men to set up patrols to stop such infiltration.

Heavy fighting between Mr. Lissouba's troops and supporters of his predecessor broke out some three months ago after the head of state sought to disarm Gen. Sassou Nguesso's militia ahead of presidential elections planned for July 27, which were subsequently indefinitely postponed.

The overall death toll is between 4,000 and 7,000 killed according to both sides, and Brazzaville is now little more than a shell-shattered wreck. Some 800,000 people are estimated to have fled.

Two other crossing points from Brazzaville to Kinshasa, Kintele and Yoro Port, have already been partly shut down in northern parts of the city under the control of the Cobras.

Witnesses said that the militia were allowing people to flee the strife-torn capital, but preventing people from travelling in the other direction — from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) capital Kinshasa to Brazzaville.

The quays that have been shut down became the main route for traders operating between the two capitals after the new DRC regime of President Laurent Kabila, who overthrew Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May, unilaterally banned normal traffic jointly run by shipping companies in the two cities.

On Monday, Mr. Lissouba's forces for a second time carried out air raids against the north, using Russian-built Mi-24 helicopters to fire rockets on positions held by the Cobras.

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Group: Aid workers threatened in former Zaire

KINSHASA (R) — A leading local human rights group accused authorities in Kinshasa of trying to silence potential witnesses before a U.N. investigation into alleged massacres in the former Zaire.

The Association for the Defence of Human Rights (AZADHO) alleged that authorities had arrested workers of non-governmental agencies in the east of the country.

Two men working for a local development agency (Crongd Maniema) in Maniema province were arrested last month and tortured by government forces, AZADHO said in a statement. One of the men, Bertin Lukanda had been detained since Aug. 6.

Mr. Kabila seized power

"According to information gathered, this campaign of repression against the leaders of NGOs in Maniema is intended to intimidate and prevent local leaders from providing testimony to the U.N. investigation into massacres in the east," it said.

"There are reports that sites for mass graves are being exhumed and that instructions have been given to local authorities not to cooperate with the inquiry," it added.

AZADHO said its own reporters in the area had not been heard of since February this year when Laurent Kabila's forces first captured it from the army of ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mr. Kabila seized power

in Kinshasa in May after a seven-month guerrilla campaign launched from the eastern provinces of the renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo.

A U.N. mission trying to investigate alleged massacres of Hutu refugees by his forces during the campaign ran aground last week when the government accused it of breaking agreements and called for it to halt the probe.

The team was appointed by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan after he bowed to pressure from Mr. Kabila to change its mandate and composition. The mission arrived in Kinshasa on Aug. 24.

A previous team was blocked by Mr. Kabila's go-

vernment after it identified what it said were sites of more than 100 mass killings and blamed them on Mr. Kabila's troops or Rwandan soldiers who backed his successful revolt.

More than a million Rwandan Hutus crossed into eastern Zaire in 1994 fearing reprisals for the genocide of minority Tutsis or their sympathisers by hardline Hutus.

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Choosing right strategy

THE U.N.-sponsored human rights meeting for Asian and South Pacific nations currently being held in Amman aims to promote the ratification of the greatest number of human rights treaties and conventions. Foreign Minister Fayed Tarawneh, who delivered the keynote speech to the regional conference on Monday, outlined the Kingdom's faith and confidence in the various international human rights instruments and offered to assist in any possible way to advance the cause of human rights.

On closer look, however, it does not look likely that this international gathering would be able to attain its goal even though the 1993 Vienna Human Rights summit recommended the holding of such regional meetings. However, what the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights should aim for is not only the formal ratification of human rights conventions but rather the faithful adherence to their provisions. It is infinitely more honourable for any nation not to ratify a treaty than to join it without any serious intention of implementing its provisions. What the international organisation should be seeking, therefore, is a bona fide ratification and not simply a public relations gesture from capitals that seek to place their names on the long list of human rights advocates. It is a sad fact that the greater number of state parties have only paid lip service to their treaty obligations without the least intention to implement them. The ratification of human rights conventions is not an end in itself and should not be made so.

Inviting country representatives to a meeting is not likely to succeed in convincing that country to sign, ratify and fulfil its obligations under human rights conventions. A more meaningful exercise would be made by sending delegations from the various committees that monitor the application of these human rights standards to the targeted capitals to convince them that they have nothing to fear from becoming state parties and try to assist them in removing any lingering obstacles real or imaginary that stand in their way to become faithful adherents to human rights. Also of significance for the U.N. commission is to emulate the work of Amnesty International by exposing human rights violations wherever they occur and use effective instruments to force states to join human rights conventions and adhere to them.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Arab Al Yawm attacked a proposal put forth by Israel's Labour Party leader Ehud Barak who suggested that a final solution to the Middle East problem could lie in the creation of a confederation grouping Israel, Palestine and Jordan. Such a proposal, which was earlier put forth by Shimon Peres, is no more than a way to deprive the Palestinians of the right to self-determination and the creation of an independent Palestinian state on Palestinian soil, said Taher Adwan. The writer said that this is exactly what the Zionism is working for and it is what Sharon and the Likud leaders have been trying to achieve because they do not wish to see a Palestinian state at Israel's door. The writer said that in this matter, the Likud and Labour do not differ from each other in their final objectives and they both want to create a substitute homeland for the Palestinians to deprive them of the right to a state of their own. The Israeli Labour Party is no less hostile to the Palestinians and their national aspirations than the Likud and one can never forget that it is the Labour Party that created an ambiguity in the Oslo accord, encouraging the Likud Party to scrap that accord altogether. The writer stressed that Israel has no choice but to recognise the Palestinian rights to a homeland in Palestine, otherwise all these useless proposals will only create an even more explosive situation in the Middle East.

A WRITER for Al Dustour said that the U.N. should not dream that if it reduces UNRWA services to the refugees, it will make the Palestinians forget their aspirations of regaining their homeland in Palestine. Washington and Tel Aviv would also be dreaming if they believed that by depriving the Palestinians of compensation for their homes and lands and by reducing services to the refugees they can kill the spirit of the Palestinian people and deny them the right to return, said Hamadeh Faraneh. Through imposing tuition fees for the education of refugee children UNRWA can only raise \$1 million not \$20 million, the amount that represents the deficit in its 1997 budget, said the writer. Even if the refugees are forced to live frugally for a decade more, they can never abandon their right to return or receive compensation for their usurped property, he stressed. The writer urged the Palestinian refugees to join hands with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and assist the efforts of the Arab states hosting them in fighting for their legitimate rights, resisting UNRWA's moves and foiling Israel's plots. He said that the more than 50 years of Palestinian question and refugee problem is a stigma in the face of the United Nations which, said the writer, has been unable to deal justly with this humanitarian question and bring about justice.

Washington Watch

Troublesome news — Republicans continue rightward drift

By Dr. James J. Zogby

IN THE midst of a summer recess, Washington is fairly quiet. But politics continues in the rest of the country with politicians travelling domestically and internationally and launching initiatives that they hope will set the tone and agenda for the fall and winter policy debates.

A number of these summer developments have been disturbing since they point to the continuing rightward drift of the Republican Party.

First is the failing effort by President Clinton to have a moderate Republican governor, William Weld of Massachusetts, confirmed as U.S. ambassador to Mexico. Weld's nomination seems doomed since it is opposed by far-right Senator Jesse Helms who, as the chairman of the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee, has the power to block the nomination. The process for all presidential nominees is as follows: the president names his choice; the relevant Senate committee holds hearings on the nomination; once the committee finishes its examination, they send a recommendation to the entire Senate which then votes to confirm or reject the nomination.

Helms, a bitter opponent of Weld's moderate views, has pledged that he will not even hold hearings on Weld's nomination.

A few weeks ago Weld received support from another Republican senator, Richard Lugar, a moderate and a true internationalist in the old Republican tradition. Lugar, who also chairs the agriculture committee in the

Senate, has threatened retaliation against Helms (whose state has many important agricultural interests) if Helms continues to block Weld's nomination. To the dismay of Weld, Lugar and the White House, no other senator has come forth to support Weld or to oppose Helms. And as late as last week, Helms made clear his continuing intention to block Weld's nomination at any cost.

Further evidence of the rightward pull of the Republican Party came at last week's Mid-West Republican Convention. Republicans from Mid-Western states gathered at the event to debate issues, plan for the 1998 congressional and statewide elections and to hear from those Republicans who are already running for the presidential nomination in 2000.

The cast of characters who appeared at the event included most of the old faces familiar to Republicans from the last three presidential races. There was Jack Kemp, who ran for president in 1988 and won the vice-presidential nomination in 1996, and Dan Quayle the former vice-president and vice-presidential candidate in 1988 and 1992. One half of the candidates from 1996 were on hand, including Lamar Alexander, Steve Forbes and Alan Keyes, all running for president in 2000. There were two new faces among the stars at the event as well, Senator Fred Thompson, chairman of the Senate campaign finance hearings and Texas Governor George W. Bush Jr., son of

the former president.

Having suffered two losses in presidential races in 1992 and 1996, Republicans are looking for new leadership and a new message they hope will reinvigorate their ranks and bring them to victory in 2000. What is both surprising and interesting is that in crafting their "new message", the majority of the speakers at the event reverted to old Republican themes of attacking Congress — even though Republicans have controlled Congress since 1994!

The story that came out of last week's meeting was that Republican leaders were attacking their own congressional leadership for having sold-out Republican principles by agreeing to a compromise balanced budget agreement with President Clinton.

Former Vice-President Dan Quayle set the tone for this attack when he chided Congress for compromising on principle. Instead of lowering taxes and reducing government, he said, this agreement with President Clinton would increase tax revenues and make government larger. And in response to the charge that if there had not been a compromise the government might have experienced a costly shutdown, Quayle and others responded that a shutdown on principle would have been better than compromise.

As the party debate unfolded during the three-day meeting, several trends became apparent. The headline of the economic conservatives appears to have put the Republican congressional

leadership on the defensive.

There was no talk of moderating the headline on social issues; while previous Republican meetings in recent years have had some discussion of opening the party to more liberal views on some social issues, these questions have not been raised in months. Finally, there has been a total absence of any discussion of foreign policy issues indicating a disturbing consensus that has developed within the party. Leadership on these issues has been ceded to the neo-conservatives and Christian fundamentalist hardliners.

This was brought home last week by two other relevant events, the conclusion of the convention of the Christian Coalition and the return to the U.S. of the new Republican Party Chairman Jim Nicholson who had just completed a visit to Israel and Jordan.

The new president of the Christian Coalition, the group founded by television evangelist Pat Robertson, announced at the completion of their annual meeting that during the next year the group would focus on some foreign policy initiatives. Since the coalition is fanatic in its support for right-wing Israeli policies and is the group responsible for recent efforts to impose sanctions on countries accused of persecuting Christians, their work can be quite troublesome.

Even more disturbing was the press conference held by the Republican Party's new chairman in which he pledged to use pressure to

prevent President Clinton from pushing Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians.

"You're going to see more attention given to Israel by the Republican leadership and that will result in more pressure on the administration to help the (Israeli) government get to peace through continued resilience, strength, and preparedness, not through softness," said Nicholson.

While in Israel, Nicholson visited the recently opened tunnel in Jerusalem that sparked bloodshed one year ago and went to see construction of controversial settlements at Jabal Abu Ghneim. He justified both Israeli acts saying that they did not look "provocative" and he would not "second-guess" the decisions of the Israeli government on these matters.

One final note: the shift to the hardline right has gone so far that there are reports that the nomination of U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk to serve as assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asia may be in trouble. A group of senators (including one Democrat) have written to Helms, urging him not to approve Indyk's appointment until Indyk pledges to support the movement of the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Other Republican senators and the National Jewish Coalition (a Republican Party organisation) have attacked Indyk, accusing him of criticising Israel and meddling in its internal affairs.

Jordan's economy needs to compete in the world market

By Wassel Al Mashagbeh

IS JORDAN ready to face the new challenges of the 21 century? The global economy is becoming more competitive and businesses around the world are downsizing to cut cost. Governments are selling assets to cut their deficits and regional economies are entering into blocs to have access to capital and good markets.

Amman has selected the city of Detroit to host the first International Trade and Commerce Exhibit in October 1997. One of the main goals of the exhibit is to help Jordanian companies market their products. This event will enhance the commercial and business ties between the United States and Jordan. Another goal of the Jordanian government is to produce new outlets to improve productivity and increase foreign investment. Jordan has traditionally experienced a trade imbalance with the United States. If this exhibition is successful, it will bring together representatives from different sectors of the economy on both sides to interact and exchange ideas, and negotiate business arrangements. The international exposure will be an enormous asset for business in Jordan, opening outlets for their products and services.

This effort will not, however, be the sole responsibility of the Kingdom. As measures are taken to downsize the government sector and its role in the economy, the private sector needs to and will carry the main task of marketing Jordan commercially and economically. It is essential that the private sector take the lead in organising similar businesses opportunities which may be instrumental in improving productivity and employment.

One of the biggest challenges that Jordanian companies face in the highly competitive, increasingly global, economy are decisive steps to improve overall quality in Jordanian manufactured products. Another challenge is adopting effective marketing strategies that Jordanian business can use to gain greater access and penetration into the United States market. Entering into partner-

ships with established companies is a productive way to overcome potential barriers in marketing and advertising.

Considerable undertaking is being coordinated at the highest levels in Amman to secure the much needed exposure for Jordanian business. This function is taking place in collaboration and cooperation with the Jordanian embassy in Washington and the governor of the state of Michigan, John Engler. The highlight of the event is His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's opening of the event; the Crown Prince will also be a guest speaker at the Economic Club of Detroit where he will address a distinguished business group that includes executives from General Motors, Chrysler and Ford Motor Companies as well as other business leaders in the Detroit Metropolitan Area. The topics will touch growth and development in Jordan and incentives for investment. By using these business forums, American, as well as world perception and understanding, of Jordan and its investment opportunities will, hopefully, improve.

Indeed, the investment capability in Jordan will not reach its full potential unless inequities and bureaucratic rigidities are addressed. It is commendable that the government has undertaken the necessary reforms in customs, taxes and banking to facilitate capital mobility and bolster foreign investment. For example, the new Investment Law provides for identical treatment of all investors, irrespective of their origin, and eliminates the discrimination between projects in the same sector.

Furthermore, the democratic climate in Jordan can be utilised to advance our economic interests, especially in Western Europe and North America. Countries in these regions are increasingly viewing Jordan as a rising model for a market-oriented economy. The government of Jordan is supporting an economy that believes in the importance of democracy, political openness and private initiative.

Jordan's political stability serves as a pivotal role in sta-

bilising the business environment. The Kingdom may attract other world economies by demonstrating the comparative advantages that it has in the region. The country enjoys a mobile, educated and flexible labour market that is capable of absorbing new technologies. It has one of the most sophisticated infrastructures in the developing world, especially in telecommunications and computer services, which are crucial elements for integration in the global economy.

Because sound monetary and financial systems are important prerequisites to sustain long-term economic growth, Jordan has made noticeable progress in developing these models. The market for banking transactions can be described as competitive, where the private sector has a great deal of ownership and control.

In order to enhance its operation and provide the needed liquidity, the Amman Financial Market was established to function as a marketplace to trade private and public securities. Foreign investors can join Jordanian banks into partnership to operate banking institutions. These opportunities will bring about more knowledge, financial resources and managerial skills that are necessary to expand regionally and internationally.

In addition, Jordan has adopted a stabilisation programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Jordanian dinar's value has stabilised and foreign exchange reserves have increased sharply. This is a sign of economic recovery and sound macroeconomics management. Jordan's success in implementing the IMF's programme is widely acknowledged and respected. Jordan can maintain this strong recovery if it continues to grant its private sector the autonomy it needs.

The writer is a Ph.D. Candidate in Economics and member of the Executive Committee, Jordan Business Week Detroit, Michigan, U.S. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

Tailored to fit the media

To the Editor:

TWO SUNDAYS before she was killed, the New York Times published a collection of gossip that characterised Princess Diana as "a mindless fruit", portrayed her relationship with Imad "Dodi" Fayed as "soap opera-quality entertainment", described Fayed as "the playboy from the House of Harrods" and stressed that among all Diana's recent suitors, he was "a clearly worse alternative, an Arab one."

The article went on to conclude: "Dodi's family has been smug about it; his maternal uncle, the Saudi tycoon Adnan Khashoggi, told a Saudi newspaper the other day, 'We welcome Diana into our family.'"

Several questions should be asked. Most immediately, why should "We welcome Diana into our family" be construed as smug? And how could the self-proclaimed "Newspaper of Record" mawkishly praise the target of its own bilious vitriol immediately upon her death? More generally, why would a newspaper that boasts "all the news that is fit to print" publish such gratuitously snide tabloid nonsense in the first place?

The answer to these questions is that Princess Diana's love for Imad Fayed was making it difficult for the New York Times to maintain a painstakingly perpetrated image of Arabs as less worthwhile than "God's chosen people". The paper must have believed, and wanted others to believe as well, that if the mother of the future King of England had lived long enough to marry him, or any other Arab, she would have posed a greater threat to Israel than did Yehiya Ayyash.

So the Western World's most effective purveyor of Israeli propaganda began a campaign to tarnish Diana.

When an ordinary person of goodwill is killed, sad is the right emotion to feel and the right word to use. In distinction, the word "tragic" is properly reserved for the death of an extraordinary person of goodwill whose life might otherwise have contributed to some great end — like real justice, or real peace.

The death of the Princess of Wales was truly and literally tragic. But the New York Times will limit its description to "sad", or perhaps "very sad". Although it is now safe to praise Diana, there are still safe limits that the paper will want to observe. All the "news that is fit to print" must still be "tailored" before it is printed.

John Hartung
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U.S.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

IT OCCURS TO ME

Power and poverty

By Ali Kassay

"CALL THE police! Where are the police?" These shouts caught everyone by surprise. Their source was a man who did not seem subject to attack nor even harassment. He was simply standing in line at a bakery at seven o'clock of a peaceful and clement Amman evening when suddenly he decided to raise the hue and cry.

We looked around to investigate which aspect of the law was being contravened and, in his opinion, needed enforcement. There was nothing out of the ordinary. The bread appeared to be of its usual quality, the prices were in conformity with the dictates of the Ministry of Supply, and people in the line were waiting politely for their turn without shoving or barging. Even the beggar woman at the entrance was trying to convince perfect strangers to bear the burden of her upkeep in a reasonably discreet manner. When no answer to the mystery presented itself, the baker decided to seek illumination from the source. "Why? What is wrong?" He inquired, worried about a scandal that might harm his business.

"I am a high ranking government official, and I can have this woman dragged to jail," exclaimed the angry man, pointing at the beggar, thereby letting us know the target but not the cause of his wrath.

Now a question arose as to whether or not he held the exalted rank in the executive which he claimed. On the one hand, I was inclined to disbelieve him, because it would be quite unlike government officials in our country to flaunt their highly merited status wantonly for the sake of an ego trip. On the other hand, the way he adroitly avoided giving a clear answer relevant to the question of the baker showed experience and skill in administrative affairs. But the baker was made of sterner stuff, and he insisted on an answer.

"Yes, you can," he conceded, giving credit where credit is due, before resuming his line of questioning: "But would you send her to jail for a reason or just because it seems like a good idea? What has she done?" Given the persistence of the investigation, the angry man decided that a response would be in order. "A young woman like her should be at home at this time of night rather than out on the streets," he proclaimed.

The crowd immediately recognised that the man was an impostor. Had he held the high position which he claimed, then the sense of responsibility that is the hallmark of every Jordanian civil servant would have urged him to recognise at least a portion of the responsibility. After all, had he been despatching his responsibilities faithfully, as every Jordanian civil servant does, the woman would probably have had a home to accommodate her and sustenance to spare her the indignity of mendicancy.

But everyone withheld comment. After all, the man could turn out to have the powers that he boasted about, and no one wanted his wrath diverted onto himself. Still, his outburst served a purpose. Everybody in the shop, and some who had left without giving the beggar any money but returned when they heard the commotion, dug deep into their pockets and gave her as much change as came out in their hands. I suppose that most Jordanians want to see poverty stamped out, but not by shooting the poor.

Features/

Anti-smokers

By Taha Hammad

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Anti-smokers meet in land of the puffing dragon

By Giles Hewitt
Agence France-Presse

BEIJING — The global anti-smoking lobby came to China last week, having decided to hold the world conference in the country that accounts for one third of all cigarettes smoked today.

The 10th world conference on tobacco or health was held in Beijing and deliberated for five days on the theme of: "Tobacco, the growing epidemic."

Nearly 1,500 experts on smoking and tobacco from 77 countries gathered last week in the Chinese capital where organisers have vowed to reveal unpublished figures on the toll of death and disease wrought by tobacco worldwide and the "catastrophic scale" of the epidemic still to come.

It was the first time the conference was held in a developing Asian country. The choice of Beijing was an acknowledgement both of the enormity of the tobacco problem in that country and the ongoing efforts by China to combat the ever-increasing threat from tobacco company expansion, the organisers said in a press release.

The conference was hosted by the Chinese Association on Smoking and Health and the Chinese Medical Association, under the auspices of several international bodies, including the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Children Fund.

"It will be a landmark conference in turning the tide of disease caused by tobacco," said Professor Lu Rushan, the conference secretary-general, before the conference.

"The death toll from tobacco will increase from three million to 10 million per annum in the coming two decades unless urgent action is taken to reduce tobacco consumption now," Prof. Lu said.

China has an estimated 320 million smokers who puff their way through an average 15 cigarettes a day,



Puffing away: About 320m Chinese smoke an average of 15 cigarettes a day (AFP photo)

according to the results of a Ministry of Health survey published in June.

Out of a total population of 1.2 billion, the survey put the number of male smokers at 300 million, against 20 million women.

Chinese society traditionally frowns on women who smoke, although changing

attitudes in recent years have seen a sharp rise in the number of female teenage smokers.

"About 590 million people in China risk being harmed directly and passively by cigarettes, and that is half the country's population," the ministry said.

As well as focusing on the

physical risks, the increasingly vocal anti-smoking lobby in China has recently taken to debunking arguments that cigarette production and consumption comprise a key platform for the national economy.

While China earned 41 billion yuan (\$4.9 billion) in tax revenues from cigarette

producers in 1993, the economic loss through ill health in the same year was 65 billion yuan, making a net loss of 24 billion yuan.

Four provinces and 70 cities in China recently banned smoking in public places, but light fines and a lack of enforcement have made for mixed results.

Only freinds invited to funeral by Buckingham

(Continued from page 1)

Massachusetts resort where the Clintons have been spending their summer holidays.

The U.S. first lady is to arrive in London early Saturday and depart later the same day.

Meanwhile, the Norwegian and Danish royal families will not attend the funeral of the late Diana, court officials said Tuesday.

Both royal courts said their members would not go to Saturday funeral in London following agreement with Buckingham Palace, the British royal house.

Only those families who

had personal relations with the princess would be invited, royal officials in Oslo and Copenhagen said after consulting with their counterparts in Buckingham Palace.

Neither the Danish Queen Margrethe and Prince Henrik, nor Norwegian King Harald and his wife Sonja, had close relations with Diana who died with two others following a high speed car chase through the streets of Paris.

According to a court official in Sweden it appeared equally unlikely that King Gustave or his wife would attend Saturday's funeral to be held in Westminster Abbey in central London.

At the request of Buckingham Palace, Diana, who lost her royal prerogatives when she divorced her husband of 15 years, Prince Charles, will not receive a full state funeral.

Pakistan will be represented at the weekend funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, by its High Commissioner in London, official Pakistani sources said Tuesday.

Pakistan foreign office sources quoted said High Commissioner Riaz Sami Khan had been directed to represent Pakistan and convey to the royal family the "deep shock" felt by the people of this country on Diana's tragic death.

Opposition to meet today after giving up dialogue with cabinet

(Continued from page 1)

former Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh last week on Al Jazeera Qatari Television. The debate was also aired on Jordan Television.

Mr. Shbeilat told the Jordan Times yesterday that he will not participate personally in today's meeting, but fellow colleagues close to his political ideas will attend, as proof that his political action "is not a solo, but it represents the people's dreams and aspirations."

"I have been accused of being a 'soloist,' while in reality I am just a loud-speaker for the people's thesis, for the thesis of democracy," Mr. Shbeilat told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview Tuesday.

"I am a soloist in the sense that I am the only one to open his mouth, but when the solo becomes an orchestra, then things will start moving," he added.

According to Mr. Shbeilat, his fellowmen who will represent him and his group "in the making" in today's meeting will submit to the other opposition leaders a list of "three corrections the Jordanian regime needs in order to enter the 21st century."

Mr. Shbeilat described his three demands as follows:

— Implementation of a constitutional monarchy system, "which is a very

fair, just and legal demand," through the abolition of "the 40 amendments so far introduced to the Constitution."

"The prime minister should be elected and not appointed," Mr. Shbeilat added.

— Drastic cuts in the expenses of the administration and royal family.

"King Abdullah said that this country was too poor and could not take but the expenses of one sharif," Mr. Shbeilat said, stressing that "it would help reach stability if the poor stopped being poorer and the rich richer."

— Abolition of military courts and most types of official immunities. "All citizens should be liable to be prosecuted before the same courts, and immunity should only be kept for the King and Crown Prince," Mr. Shbeilat maintained.

Meanwhile, the Jordan Times learned that some prominent leaders will not participate in today's meeting because they are momentarily out of the country. Head of pan-Arabist Al Mustaqbal and chairman of the Council of the Arab Parties, Suleiman Arar, as well as former Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat and human rights activist Labib Kamhaw, who both belong to the group of 82 independents who signed the pro-boycott petition two weeks ago, will not be able to take part in today's meeting.

Crown Prince stresses important role of Russia in Mideast peace

(Continued from page 1)

policies which inhibit growth, investment and the free exchange of goods". The Crown Prince added that "threats also emanate from the abuse of natural resources such as water and agricultural lands. These dangers have been exacerbated by higher expectations and ferment demands by peoples to have their natural resources protected and defended at all costs."

The Crown Prince called on regional bodies to address issues which impact the concept of security, such as environment, demographic growth, mass migration, urbanisation, communal issues, terrorism, drugs and organised crime. Prince Hassan emphasised the need for regional bodies to address issues of common concern, in addition to the comprehensive security concept, which includes economic, social and humanitarian dimensions.

Stressing the importance of the human dimension and peoples' participation, the Crown Prince said "at the base of any concept of security, has always been the human dimension. The power of non-material human needs, such as participation and free expression, is the greatest power on earth. People need and seek a stake in their governance."

"Nations need transparency and public accountability," the Crown Prince said in a reference to the need for fostering democratic culture.

Highlighting the great contribution of political and economic structures to security, Prince Hassan said "when we recognise that security is ultimately about the welfare of individual human beings, and accordingly seek to improve their quality of

life on a non-discriminatory basis, we engage in a new kind of politics: politics where people matter or anthropopolitics if you will."

Referring to the wars in the Caucasus, Middle East and Balkans, the Crown Prince said "The vast majority of the 90 or more armed conflicts since the end of the cold war have been in the main ethno-centric. There have been wars in Caucasus, conflicts in the Middle East, disputes in the Balkans, strife in Africa and dissension in the Indian sub-continent. Even Western Europe is not immune to this danger, as the Irish question continues to defy a peaceful resolution." The Crown Prince added that these conflicts have been coupled with the threat of terror which has assumed an international dimension.

Prince Hassan arrived in Moscow at the first leg of a two-nation working visit, which will also take him to Prague. Prince Hassan, who was accompanied by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Rashid and Princess Badia'a, and an official delegation, will discuss in Moscow with the Russian premier, Victor Chernomyrdin and Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov the efforts made to overcome the current stalemate in the Middle East peace process and bilateral relations, as well as issues of common concern.

Prince Hassan will also discuss with senior Russian officials economic and trade issues and will pursue discussion of an economic and trade agreement which will be concluded between the two countries.

Prince Hassan and the official delegation accompanying him will discuss with representatives of the economic and trade sectors means of enhancing economic and trade relations

between the private sectors of both countries. Prince Hassan is also expected to meet with Arab ambassadors in Moscow today.

In Prague, the Czech capital, Prince Hassan will meet with the Czech President Vaclav Havel and discuss with him bilateral relations, in addition to means of pushing the peace process forward. The Crown Prince will also address a major conference entitled Forum 2000. The conference will be attended by many political and intellectual figures.

The official delegation accompanying the Prince includes Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs, and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani and Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh.

Upon departure from Amman, Prince Hassan was seen off at the airport by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Upper House Speaker Zeid Rifai, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, advisors to His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan, as well as senior military officials and the Russian Ambassador Alexander Saltnov and Czech Charge d'affaires in Amman. Mr. Saltnov described the Crown Prince's visit to Moscow as extremely important at this time when the Middle East peace process is facing obstacles.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Saltnov said Prince Hassan's talks with senior Russian officials will focus on finding solutions to the peace process and clearing the atmosphere in the region, noting that Russia and Jordan maintains continuous contacts and dialogue on regional issues.

Israel rules out settlement freeze ahead of Albright Mideast tour

(Continued from page 1)

of Jerusalem, the borders and status of the Palestinian entity, the fate of existing settlements and the issue of Palestinian refugees.

Mr. Naveh will lead a delegation to Washington which will also include Uzi Arad, Mr. Netanyahu's diplomatic advisor, and foreign ministry officials Yuval Rotem and David Bardugo.

Meanwhile, Jewish settlers threw stones Tuesday at Palestinian workers on a U.S.-funded road project in downtown Hebron. The American project manager and two Palestinian employees were arrested, for

refusing to cooperate with Israeli police.

The United States is funding a \$1 million renovation of Shuhada street, a main thoroughfare that passes by two settler enclaves. The project is to lead to the street's reopening to Palestinian traffic for the first time in more than three years.

The settlers vehemently oppose the reopening, claiming it will put them in danger of Palestinian attacks.

Also Tuesday, several thousand Palestinians returned to jobs in Israel after Israel eased its monthlong closure on the West Bank and Gaza strip. The travel ban had been imposed

after Jerusalem bombing. Israel has blamed Hamas for the blast.

At 3 a.m., a first group of workers from the Gaza Strip lined up at the Erez crossing into Israel. One of those waiting to cross, Saleh Hussein, 47, said he found it difficult to feed his wife and six children.

"The people's patience is over," he said. "If Netanyahu continues this policy against us, everything will explode."

Israel announced Monday that 4,000 workers and 2,000 merchants would be able to enter Israel. Before last month's explosion, some 100,000 Palestinians worked in Israel.

7 paparazzi face justice probe for manslaughter

(Continued from page 1)

Disclosures that the princess's driver was speeding and had three times the legal level of alcohol in his blood had earlier taken some of the heat off the photographers.

Judicial sources said a post-mortem test on driver Henri Paul, 41, showed he had about 1.70 grammes of alcohol per litre of blood — about the equivalent of four glasses of whisky or two aperitifs and a bottle of wine.

But prosecutors denied reports that the speedometer of the wrecked Mercedes-Benz was stuck on 19th kph, almost four times the speed limit. It showed zero, they said.

The manslaughter charges applied to the deaths of the princess, Fayed and driver Henri Paul while the bodily harm charge covered the injuries sustained by the only survivor, Diana's bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones.

The probe will seek to

establish if the paparazzi's chase led to the crash.

Bernard Darteville, a lawyer for the Fayed family who has said he would sue the photographers for damages, said a witness had reported a motorcycle zig-zagging in front of the Mercedes in an apparent bid to try to slow it down just before the crash.

But lawyers for the photographers said they saw no mention of this in the prosecutor's 350-page file.

The testimony of Mr. Rees-Jones, who was sitting in the front passenger seat, will be crucial in the probe. But he had not yet sufficiently recovered to be questioned.

Police have seized motorcycles, cameras and films and searched the offices of several news agencies in search of pictures of the chase and crash. They are also looking for photographers who may have escaped arrest.

Frederic Maillez, who was the first doctor to arrive at the scene of the

crash and who gave first aid to Diana, said he saw 10 to 15 photographers taking pictures of the car.

At least two major tabloid newspapers said they had turned down offers of pictures of Diana in the wrecked car.

Bild, Germany's largest-selling tabloid, published a front page photograph of emergency workers trying to free her from the tangle of metal.

Advocate Darteville said the photographers were responsible for the crash, as their hounding of the couple during their French holiday had made security officials nervous and led to last-minute changes in routine.

He said Paul, the deputy security chief of the Fayed-owned Ritz hotel in Paris, had been called in from home on the evening before the crash to drive Diana's car while her regular driver drove in another direction in an attempt to lure paparazzi away.

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Arab Gulf states earn more than \$50b during first eight months of this year

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are heading for another good financial year with crude prices remaining firm despite Iraq's return to the international oil market, experts have said.

During the first eight months of 1997, the price of OPEC's basket of seven crudes averaged around \$18.9, one of their highest levels in 10 years.

The price is far higher than the \$13-\$17 average assumed by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states in their budgets for 1997.

"The current oil price is good for the Gulf economies and budgets as it is higher than the level they projected early this year," a Gulf banker said.

"It is expected that their income will be high this year albeit lower than in 1996 as oil prices will average between \$17 and \$19," he added.

With their crude exports standing at around 11.5 million barrels per day, the six GCC states earned more than

\$50 billion in the first eight months of 1997. The income is projected to surpass \$75 billion during the year, according to experts.

Oil prices have remained strong despite the return of sanction-hit Iraq to the market and a slackening in seasonal demand in the third quarter.

Analysts attributed this to the strict rules governing Iraqi crude sales under its agreement with the United Nations and other market factors.

Oil prices are expected to strengthen in the last quarter due to higher seasonal demand after a slight decline over the past few months.

But they are forecast to be lower than in 1996, when prices soared to nearly \$20.2 and boosted the revenues of the GCC countries to around \$80 billion, one of their highest levels in 15 years.

"This year will not necessarily be like last year but it will be much better than the previous years," an oil expert said.

"An \$18 price is an

ideal level in terms of income for the GCC countries and for global demand. It will bring additional revenues to the six governments and lift their economies despite a decline in the oil sector," he added.

Oil provides more than two thirds of the total income of the GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — and this has made their economies highly vulnerable to price fluctuations.

Economists said strong prices this year would boost the GCC's gross domestic product (GDP) despite a surge of more than seven per cent in 1996.

They noted most member states had projected higher spending and the private sector had been encouraged by new incentives to invest in more projects.

Saudi Arabia, the world's dominant oil power, boosted expenditure by around \$8.5 billion in 1997 and forecast

revenues at nearly \$43 billion.

But Saudi experts expect revenues to overshoot projections because of high oil prices and exports of petrochemicals and other non-oil products.

The Saudi government said recently it had begun paying its debt to farmers, indicating high oil prices were pumping surplus funds into its coffers.

Bankers said part of the funds were also being channelled into its international reserves, which had been sharply eroded by large financial contributions to the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi invasion forces.

"There is no doubt 1997 will be another good year for the GCC economic and financial position," a banker said.

"The current account situation will again be good but the deficits in their budgets will depend on whether they are sticking to projected spending or again exceeding it."

UAE investment tops \$11b in 1996

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Investment in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) exceeded \$11 billion in 1996, most of which came from the private sector, an official study has showed.

Public and private investment in the oil-rich Gulf country stood at around 40.9 billion dirhams (\$11.1 billion) in 1996 compared with 39.8 billion dirhams (\$10.8 billion) in 1995, said the study by Zuhair Amin, an adviser to the government of Ajman, one of the seven emirates in UAE.

The private sector accounted for nearly 66 per cent of the total, investing 27.2 billion dirhams (\$7.41 billion) in 1996.

The study said oil and other productive sectors had the lion's share of investment, receiving nearly 22.5 billion dirhams (\$6.13 billion). The other beneficiaries

were services, trade, insurance, and communications.

"The increase in private investments is in line with the government's policy of giving the private sector a greater role in the economy," it said.

It gave no figures for oil projects but industry sources said nearly seven billion dirhams (\$1.9 billion) had been pumped into this industry annually over the past six years. The projects include boosting crude oil output capacity and development of the refining and gas facilities.

The study forecast the UAE's gross domestic product would grow by around 4.5 per cent to 171 billion dirhams (\$46.6 billion) in 1997. This compares with a nominal growth of around 10 per cent in 1996, when oil prices surged by more than \$3 to around \$20.

Israel likely to meet '97 budget deficit target

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli government will meet or only slightly miss its 1997 budget deficit target, Moshe Leon, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's chief economic adviser, said in an interview.

"We cut the 1997 budget three times, a total cut of eight billion shekels, a figure never achieved before," Mr. Leon told the Jerusalem Post.

The government has set a 1997 budget deficit target of 2.8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). The Bank of Israel and the treasury have warned that the domestic deficit will end one billion to two billion shekels above the target of 7.9 billion shekels. But this could be offset by the foreign budget, which could end the year in surplus or with a deficit much smaller than the target of 1.835 billion shekels.

The main components of the foreign budget are U.S. civilian aid and interest payments on bonds issued overseas.

Mr. Leon said any budget cut in 1998 would not be as large as this year's.

Mr. Leon would not confirm Mr. Netanyahu is unhappy with the treasury's 1998 economic forecast but said he himself would not be satisfied with growth of only 3.0 per cent next year. The treasury forecast GDP growth of 3.0 to 3.5 per cent in 1998.

"I think we can achieve 3.5 per cent or higher," Mr. Leon said.

"I cannot, however, ask for new forecasts. The prime minister just wants the treasury to present a programme to achieve the 1998 targets or even surpass them. He (Netanyahu) wants to know how the reality can be more optimistic than the forecasts," he added.

Mr. Leon reiterated the government would likely raise more than seven billion shekels this year from privatisation with the sale of a controlling stake in Bank Hapoalim expected to take place soon.

"While I cannot yet speak of a sum for next year, we will continue our programme of privatisation at the same rate as in 1997," Mr. Leon said.

REUTERS

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The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	FRF	ESP
US Dollar	1.0000	1.3328	0.6329	0.5048	121.40	1.3840	1736.30	2.0541	6.1654
DE Mark	0.5498	1.0000	0.4936	0.4063	65.20	0.7347	936.11	1.3285	3.3643
GB Sterling	1.5888	2.9178	1.0000	0.7856	163.27	2.2003	2841.84	3.2855	9.8141
CH Franc	0.6943	1.2168	0.4171	1.0000	80.89	0.8188	1185.48	1.3710	4.0953
JP Yen	0.0082	1.5098	0.5174	1.2389	1.0000	1.1330	14.71	170.07	5.0806
CA Dollar	0.7225	1.3240	0.4537	0.6873	1.14	1.0000	1289.73	1.4915	4.4554
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0257	0.3518	0.8843	1473.82	0.7745	1.0000	11.56	3.4520
NL Guilder	0.4845	0.8873	0.3042	0.2430	58.73	0.8701	864.47	1.0000	2.9885
FR Franc	0.1622	0.2971	0.1018	0.2405	16.65	0.2243	33.47	33.4700	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP	SDG
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7080	3.7585	0.3770	3.6408	0.36728	1538.00	3.3960	1.0000
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	1.0000	5.2972	0.5325	5.1419	0.4308	2172.32	4.7988	1.0000
Saudi Riyal	0.2688	0.1888	1.0000	0.1005	0.27	0.0613	0.98	410.08	0.9085
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	8.9483	1.0000	9.86	0.8082	9.74	4079.58	9.0880
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.9302	1.0000	1.93	0.0638	1.01	422.47	0.9328
Kuwait Dinar	3.2782	2.3205	12.2947	1.2358	11.93	1.0000	12.04	5041.80	0.9328
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.9212	1.0126	0.9912	0.0631	1.00	418.75	0.9246
Lebanese 1000	0.65	0.4603	2.4386	0.2461	2.3670	0.1983	2.3880	1.0000	2.2081
Egyptian	0.2545	0.2085	1.0444	0.1110	1.0720	0.0898	1.0815	452.89	1.0000

Energy			Mid-East Currencies					
Commodity	Unit	Price	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Brent	18.38	18.33	SA Riyal	0.2866	0.4889	0.1675	0.4016	32.378
WTI/Texas	18.60	18.63	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4983	0.1711	0.4101	33.057
Bonny	18.38	18.33	KW Dinar	3.2782	6.0132	2.0587	4.9383	397.06
Dubai	17.90	17.70	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.6636	1.9667	3.9952	322.93
UL Gas	199.00	201.00	CY Pound	1.8492	3.3885	1.1815	2.7832	224.37

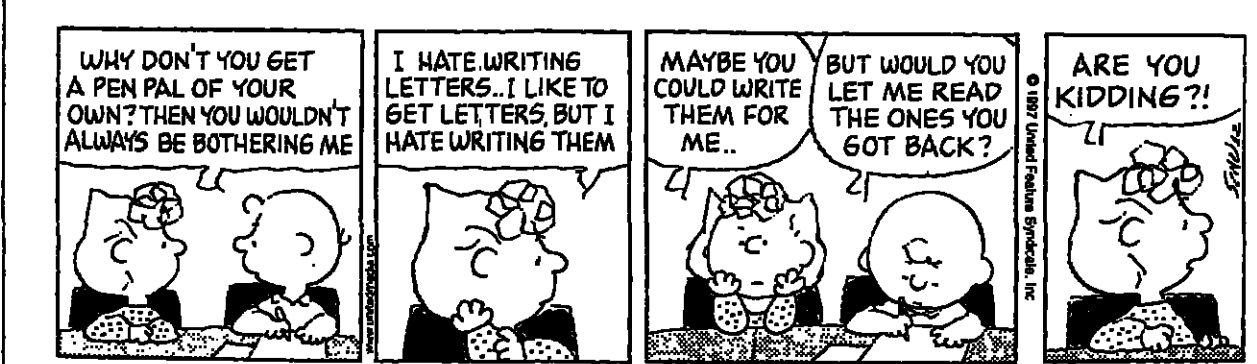
Metal Prices				Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)						
Metal	Std	Offer		Period	1 -	3 -	6 -	9 -	1 -	
				Currency	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year	
Gold (oz's)	322.4	322.9		USD	5.53	5.54	5.74	5.80	5.93	
Silver (oz's)	4.83	4.66		GBP	6.94	7.18	7.31	7.38	7.50	
Platinum (oz's)	407.1	410.1		JPY	0.43	0.42	0.50	0.55	0.46	
AL (3 Months)	1599	1800		DEM	3.10	3.24	3.31	3.43	3.50	
CU (3 Months)	2139	2140		FRF	3.22	3.29	3.42	3.52	3.61	
Zinc (3 Months)	1484	1485		CHF	1.06	1.28	1.31	1.50	1.50	
Lead (3 Months)	844	845		ITL	6.77	6.89	6.80	6.48	6.39	

Main Equity Indices									
Source	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls	Source	Index
New York	DOW JONES	7785.01	162.59	2.13	7801.5	7824.1	7822.4	New York	S&P 500
London	FT-SE 100	4951.9	81.7	1.68	4964.2	4872.2	4870.2	London	FT-SE 100
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18232.52	258.22	1.44	18245	17968	17974	Tokyo	NIKKEI 225
Paris	CAC 40	2921.15	115.31	4.11	2921.6	2817.3	2805.8	Paris	CAC 40
Frankfurt	DAX	4047.37	57.41	1.44	4051.8	4032.9	3990	Frankfurt	DAX

Energy			Currency		
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell
Coffee (c/b)	0	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1750	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1393	1.144
Sugar (\$/ton)	348	Spot	DE Mark	0.389	0.390
Wheat (\$/ton)	140	Spot	CH Franc	0.4734	0.4755
Soya (c/b)	22.5	Spot	FR Franc	0.1158	0.1162
Tea (c/kg)	165	Spot	JP Yen	0.5827	0.5856
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3455	0.3477
Rice (\$/ton)	430	Spot	IT Lira	0.3988	0.4008

JOD Cross Rates																							
Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency														
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	GB Sterling	1.383	1.44	DE Mark	0.389	0.3909	CH Franc	0.4734	0.4758	FR Franc	0.1158	0.1162	JP Yen	0.5827	0.5856	NL Guilder	0.3455	0.3472	IT Lira	0.3988	0.4008

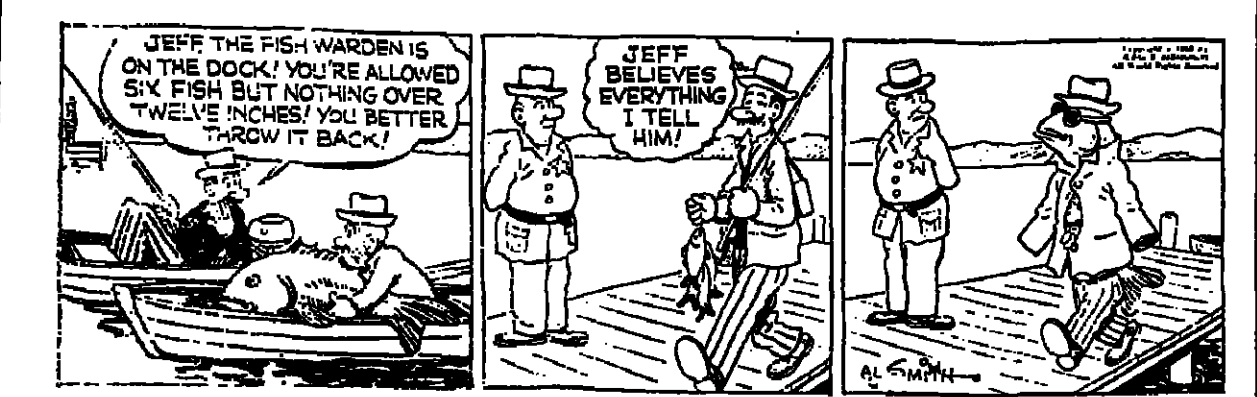
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword



by Jay Sullivan

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 33 Wyatt and Virgil
 44 Walk-on
 56 Diary
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 90 Greg Norman
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Japanese bond yields fall to all-time low

TOKYO (AFP) — Amid fresh fears about the strength of its economic recovery, Japan's long-term interest rates sank below two per cent last week, the lowest level seen anywhere in the world in more than half a century.

The rally in the Japanese government bond market followed reported comments by Vice Finance Minister Eisuke Sakakibara voicing concern that a hike in consumption taxes earlier this year was having a larger-than-expected impact.

"We have started to feel some concern about the weakness of consumption

and the equity markets in the last two weeks," Mr. Sakakibara told the Financial Times. "I am more concerned about the economy than I was two months ago."

A subsequent surge in Japanese government bond prices pushed long-term yields below two per cent for the first time, with the bellwether 10-year bond dropping to 1.995 per cent at one stage before closing at 2.045 per cent.

Cameron Umetsu, senior economist at UBS Securities, said the fall below two per cent marked the lowest level in long-term interest rates since 1941 when United States Treasury bond yields hit similar levels.

"The low bond yields basically reflect the lack of confidence in future economic prospects," he said. "There is no economic data in the near term that promises to change expectations."

Mr. Umetsu also noted that Japanese banks were tending to invest in bonds rather than shares. "Banks are heavily weighted in bonds in spite of the low yields," he said. "There's a high degree of balance sheet distress which constrains the appetite for risk."

Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuoka meanwhile asserted that there was "no gap" between his assessment of the economy and that attributed to Mr. Sakakibara, known as "Mr. Yen" for the influence his remarks have on financial markets.

"Although his comments were interpreted to have

assumed a more bearish tone, my and his view on the economy is that it is recovering modestly," the finance minister told a news conference.

Mr. Mitsuoka admitted that the move to raise consumption taxes from three per cent to five per cent in April was having a "lingering" impact, echoing remarks made earlier by Bank of Japan Governor Yasuo Matsuhashita.

"But the economy is continuing a modest recovery," he said. Mr. Mitsuoka added that his ministry would "monitor closely" movements in share prices to assess whether the market's prolonged slump would adversely affect the recovery.

At a separate news conference, Mr. Matsuhashita said that the economy was "continuing its modest recovery" on the back of increased net exports and firm growth in private-sector capital spending.

He said an extended recovery was a "high possibility" despite the adverse impact of the consumption tax hike.

"We understand that some indicators such as department store sales continue to show year-on-year falls due to the tax hike and unseasonable summer weather conditions," the central bank governor said.

"But as labour and wage conditions continue to improve steadily, the trend of the recovery of consumer spending has not been lost," he said.

"The underlying cyclical mechanism is working progressively and sufficiently so there is a high possibility that the economy will extend the recovery, although the pace is expected to remain moderate," he added.

Referring to recent concern about a build-up in inventories, Mr. Matsuhashita said levels remained "in an appropriate range overall,

Iran carpet exports taking off again after slump

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's luxury carpet export industry is slowly recovering from a two-year slump after new rules allowed exporters to maximise foreign currency earnings.

Leading exporters said the value and volume of hand-woven and machine-made carpet sales to the main European, Arab Gulf and Canadian consumer markets were on the rise.

The rebound, if sustained, would be a major boost for Iran's non-oil economy as the industry is the country's main foreign exchange earner after the annual \$18 billion in oil revenue.

"Exports are rising because of the new export rules...we hope this is the beginning of the revival for Iranian carpets," Akbar Heristichian, president of the 420-member Iranian Carpet Exporters Association told Reuters.

In the last two months carpet exporters have been able to capitalise on new currency regulations that allow them to exchange their hard currency at preferential rates.

The exporters can now deposit their foreign currency earnings with the central bank which will issue them a trade certificate which they can then take to Tehran's stock exchange.

At the stock exchange they can use the certificate to get some 4,700 Iranian rials to the U.S. dollar, versus the official "export rate" of 3,000 rials and the government's own rate of 1,700, the traders said.

The 4,700 rate can usually be obtained only from Tehran's illegal street currency traders.

In 1995, carpet exporters were forced to deposit all their currency with the central bank at the rate of 3,000 rials, leading to a drastic drop in official exports as firms saw little or no incentive in going through the central bank.

Carpet exporters can also import items from a list of 29 goods against their hard currency allocation, an attractive option given constantly rising prices for sought-after consumer goods in Iran.

"Now with the easing of regulations exports are on the rise. For the past four months there is a sign of increase," said Nosratollah Mahmoudzadeh, director of Asil Carpet Co.

Exports of hand-woven carpets earned Iran \$130 million in the first three months of the Iranian year which began March 21, 21 per cent higher than the same period the previous year, according to government figures.

Government officials are targeting \$700 million to \$800 million in sales this year, versus \$602 million in the last Iranian year which was 35 per cent down from the previous year.

Iranian carpets typically fetch anywhere between 200,000 rials to 50 million rials in overseas markets, traders said.

"We faced a crisis because of the constant changing in the regulations but in the last two months it has recovered," said one exporter who said his sales had grown between 10-20 per cent.

Despite the upturn, Iranian exporters will still struggle to recapture market share lost to other weavers particularly in India, Turkey and China.

Managers also admit that they will have to improve their marketing techniques and modify designs to better meet the changing tastes of key European buyers.

"The problem is that the Iranian carpet did not defend itself in the European market. Many Europeans cannot tell the difference whether a carpet is made in Iran, India or China. It is a problem of marketing," said Mr. Mahmoudzadeh.

While in the mid-1970s Iran had more than a 50 per cent share in the world carpet market, this share had now fallen by half, a worrying development for the 2.5 million people directly involved in the industry.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Arab Bank reportedly refuses to transfer shares to foreign investors

** BROKERS AT THE Amman Financial Market faced a snag Tuesday trying to execute deals on Arab Bank shares for non-Arab, foreign buyers. Some brokers said the management of the Arab Bank refused to transfer the ownership of any contract to foreign beneficiaries wanting to purchase the bank's shares. The dealers said the bank refused to register the non-Arab/foreign purchases on the strength of some articles in the internal regulations of the bank.


The stock exchange dealers said they were eager to have the Arab Bank clear its stand on foreign buying of its shares in writing and in an unambiguous manner in order to be able to deal with their foreign clients in a transparent and frank way. Despite large foreign buying orders, brokers could not honour the requests as the Arab Bank had still not clarified its stand on foreign ownership.

Samir Jaradat, a broker, said: "Due to the unclear situation and the absence of a strong and efficient management, dealers were unable to find direction from the supervising body concerning foreign interest in buying the shares of the Arab Bank." The brokers demanded that the internal regulations of the Arab Bank be discussed to determine the extent of their contradiction with the decision to raise to 100 per cent the percentage of foreign share ownership in some economic sectors.

According to some stock exchange dealers, the Arab Bank is barricading behind the refusal to raise foreign ownership in the bank and is insisting that the majority of the equity belong to Arab investors. It is expected that the price of an Arab Bank share will reach JD350 if the foreign ownership is cleared, especially as it has become almost confirmed that the bank will be giving a free bonus share by capitalising about JD0.5 billion of reserves and retained earnings (Al Ra'i).

The Arab Bank was keeping an absolute silence over transferring shares to foreign parties although some brokers had executed some small transactions involving Arab Bank shares Tuesday. It remains to be seen today whether the bank has made the change in equity in its books.

Jordanian equity in the bank has risen in the past year to about 42 per cent whereas Arab equity went over 57 per cent with the remaining one per cent being owned by non-Arab investors.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARAFI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 02/09/1997											
PAST 22 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	F / S	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
1 307.000	231.000	ARAB BANK	14.7	1.25	43	1130	350900	306.50	320.00	13.50+	
1 240	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	37	78626	151982	1.91	1.94	0.03+	
1 600	2.760	BANK OF JORDAN	6	0.00	2	850	2616	3.10	3.06	0.04-	
1 480	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.4	7.48	5	2662	5978	2.24	2.26	0.02+	
5.200	4.550	THE HOUSING BK.	14.2	4.08	3	3850	18288	4.75	4.75	-	
1.480	2.440	JOR. KIDWAT BANK	11.6	0.00	2	350	1118	3.13	3.20	0.07+	
1.400	3.520	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	16.1	3.03	44	16400	64807	3.85	3.96	0.11+	
1.720	1.110	UNION BK. SAV. INST.	8	0.00	1	50	62	1.24	1.23	0.01-	
3.800	3.080	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	21.9	0.00	1	600	2040	3.40	3.40	-	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 230.75 %CHG: +3.56 138 104518 597790											
1.820	1.530	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.1	5.99	15	9550	15909	1.66	1.67	0.01+	
1.940	1.320	JORD. ELECTRICITY	11.3	6.05	2	250	475	1.93	1.90	0.03-	
6.000	4.000	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	14.6	4.21	7	2419	11490	5.00	4.75	0.25-	
1.550	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	6	0.00	17	22380	31786	1.41	1.44	0.03+	
1.010	820	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.8	6.52	1	400	368	92	92	-	
3.720	2.890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	8.7	0.00	15	13450	45080	3.37	3.35	0.02-	
1.220	930	SARAA EDUCATION	6	0.00	3	1300	1391	1.03	1.03	-	
2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	8.3	6.32	5	1750	3033	1.72	1.74	0.02+	
1.010	640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	7000	5180	0.71	0.74	0.03+	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 110.51 %CHG: -1.11 68 61519 137211											
4.450	3.220	JOR. CHEM. FACT.	26.1	2.84	15	42350	164956	3.89	3.88	0.01-	
4.140	2.860	JOR. PROSPECT MINES	10.8	2.58	4	10300	39362	3.82	3.88	0.06+	
10 310	9.070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	8.52	39	19920	10930	10.25	10.43	0.18+	
1 840	1.620	INDUSTRIAL CORP. MGR.	9	0.00	1	160	609	1.70	1.69	0.01-	
7 150	5.800	JOR. WOODSTOCK MILLS	9.7	3.33	3	983	5893	5.95	6.00	0.05+	
4 250	3.840	ARAB PHARM. MFG.	11.8	4.67	70	24431	103614	4.16	4.28	0.12+	
2 870	2.100	JORDAN DAIRY	8.5	9.66	2	200	505	2.52	2.53	0.01+	
1 540	4.300	DAS ALQAMA. PV. INV.	13.5	4.55	2	800	2750	5.80	5.80	-	
3 850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.3	11.11	6	1175	2671	2.26	2.25	0.01-	
960	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.9	0.00	5	4000	1850	4.6	4.7	0.10+	
1 290	1.000	ARAB PAPER CORP. TND.	33.0	0.00	13	7400	7980	1.07	1.08	0.01+	
770	510	NATIONAL INDS.	6	0.00	7	5850	3144	53	54	0.01+	
1 200	510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	6	0.00	27	12050	6916	55	58	0.03+	
1 870	1.120	JOR. SULPHUR-CHEM	6	0.00	7	2300	1426	61	62	0.01+	
1 950	1.080	UNIV. MODN. INDS.	12.2	10.99	14	4400	4004	1.26	1.29	0.03+	
1 810	910	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	14.6	4.02	25	14550	9285	1.52	1.52	-	
1 620	1.300	NATL. CHOCOLATE	12.2	10.99	14	4400	4004	0.91	0.91	-	
1 070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.8	0.00	11	5000	4295	85	86	0.01+	
2 090	1.340	EL -ZAY READY WEAR	56.0	0.00	3	350	876	1.60	1.59	0.01-	
1 330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	8	17850	2242	1.19	1.19	-	
1 180	860	UNION CR. & WEG.	50.9	0.00	35	12300	2557	1.08	1.12	0.04+	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 121.66 %CHG: +0.43 322 202139 467219											
GRAND TOTAL											
INDEX: 171.09 %CHG: +2.09 528 368176 1202220											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 02/09/1997											
710	410	MACH. EXP. REPT. MACH.	6	0.00	5	3500	1743	50	50	-	
630	430	CENTRAL COS. SHARING	6	0.00	3	6300	2223	50	50	-	
650	400	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.4	0.00	16	26650	10399	40	39	0.01-	
950	540	JOR. FIN. INV. CO.	6	0.00	8	11058	6372	57	58	0.01+	
840	660	UNION INV. CO.	9.0	0.00	25	14840	30622	71	72	0.01+	
970	370	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	6	0.00	19	16350	6216	39	38	0.01-	
950	720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	6	0.00	3	8267	4477	85	85	-	
950	610	AL-DAMLIYAH 75%	71.0	0.00	13	26479	13026	74	74	-	
480	200	NATL. MACH. ENG. TND.	6	0.00	7	10600	2650	25	25	-	
730	500	ARAB FOOD & MED.	6	0.00	5	3500	1735	50	49	0.01-	
570	380	ARAB INTL. INV. TND.	43.8	0.00	3	1500	575	38	38	-	
950	400	NATL. MACH. ENG. TND.	14.6	4.02	12	14550	6548	45	45	-	
620	710	JORDAN STEEL	33.9	6.67	2	7300	5475	75	75	-	
580	440	ARAB ELECT. INDS.	6	0.00	3	7450	3651	49	49	-	
730	580	MID-EAST PHARM. 75%	6	0.00	1	1000	290	64	64	-	
1 190	860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	2	0.00	23	14362	12765	1.10	1.16	0.06+	
670	550	RAZI PHARM. 85%	2	0.00	37	51389	27426	67	70	0.03+	
570	310	INDOS. ENG.	6	0.00	29	40400	11994	31	31	-	
620	590	NATL. POWER	2	0.00	14	19363	10425	66	67	0.01+	
1 000	790	NAT. ALUMINUM 75%	98.8	0.00	4	955	397	71	71	-	
860	500	MID-EAST COMPLEX	7.4	16.67	12	9550	5725	60	60	-	
GRAND TOTAL											
244 422334 164831											

Emirates signs for two more Boeing 777s

DUBAI (AP) — Dubai-based Emirates Airline will buy two of the seven Boeing 777-300 aircraft that it had tentatively committed to purchase, the Gulf News has reported.

The aircraft will be delivered in October and November 1998, the English language newspaper said.

The 777-300 is a longer range version of the aircraft already in service with the airline. This month, Emirates will take delivery of the last of seven shorter range Boeing 777 airliners it had placed firm orders for. Aircraft deals are usually made through firm orders and options, or tentative commitments, which allow airlines to back out if necessary.

The deal for the new aircraft was signed in Dubai between Emirates chairman, Sheikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, and David Doucette, Boeing's regional director, the newspaper said.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

"You'd probably have a better memory if you ever did something worth remembering."

JUMBLE

Jordan to play in Group D at Asian Basketball Championship Kingdom to meet Kazakhstan Sept. 11

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan will be playing alongside Kazakhstan, Chinese Taipei and Indonesia in Group D when the 17th Men's Asian Basketball Championship gets underway in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Sept. 11-19.

The Kingdom's team will be playing Kazakhstan in the championship's opening match followed by the Saudi Arabia-Hong Kong match. Jordan next plays Taipei Sept. 12 and Indonesia Sept. 13.

Group A includes China, Iran, the Philippines and Bahrain.

Group B includes Korea, the United Arab Emirates, India and Bangladesh.

Group C includes Japan, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong.

Only the top two teams in each group will move to the second round.

The fifteen teams playing in Riyadh include the top five from the last championship and the hosts who qualified automatically. There are also two teams from each of the ABC's five regional zones.

Jordan and Iran automatically qualified from the West Asia Zone. Both teams took the two allocated slots following the withdrawal of Iraq and Syria from the pre-qualifiers which were due to be held in Tehran, Iran, earlier last month.

Up to seven teams are eligible to contest qualifiers in the future as the West Asia zone also includes Palestine, Yemen and Lebanon, but the three are out this year since they have not paid their dues to the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC).

The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) was seriously contemplating cancelling participation in Riyadh but later dropped the option as that would entail penalties by the ABC.

The JBF has been facing a financial problem and cancelled the women's participation in the Asian Championship in Bangkok earlier in the year.

With most of its allocated budget spent on the women's and men's participation in the Pan-Arab Games the JBF had to appeal to the ministry to secure funding.

Although they received JD7,000 from the Ministry of Culture and Youth, the cash-strapped federation dropped the option of a serious training camp in East Europe or hosting teams in Amman and with the sponsorship of Aramex they settled for two training matches in Lebanon in preparation for the Asian tournament.

Joined by Al Jazireh's players, the national team played two matches against Lebanese clubs in the Mreimn Tournament in Beirut on Aug. 21-24.

Jordan lost to Antranig 73-69 and beat Wardieh 72-64.

The national team has been training under new coach Imad Al Saeed after the JBF relieved the Ukrainian coach of his duties following the team's sixth place finish at July's Pan-Arab Games in Beirut.

Minor changes are expected on the lineup. Following the Pan-Arab Games, Zeid Alkhas, Mahmoud Sha'ban, Marwan Saeedi, Naser Bassam and Jan Sahlieh left for varied reasons and the JBF named Ramez Hammoudeh, Ghaith Ennabi, Nihad Madi and Ala' Bilbeissi as replacements. They will join Ma'an Odeh, Yousef Abu Bakr, Naser Alawneh, Faisal Nsour, Ayman Du'yes, Naser Bassam and Fadi Saqqa.

Top veteran players like Hilal Barakat, Naser Bushnaq, Marwan Ma'touq and Yousef Zaghloul are missing the lineup.

F.A. plans charity match in memory of Diana

LONDON (AFP) — The Football Association confirmed Tuesday that they remain "very keen" on honouring the memory of Diana, Princess of Wales by staging a charity match to raise funds for the Bosnian victims of landmines.

The Princess raised world awareness of the injuries inflicted by landmines and an approach had already been made to the FA by Christian Aid about the possibility of organising a charity game before her tragic death.

Lancaster Gate officials will now continue negotiations with the charity organisation, although they pointed out that proposals remain very much in their infancy.

"The Princess was obviously very keen on the landmines issue and we were already having talks with charity organisations before she died," said a spokeswoman.

"No details were finalised, but we are still very keen to pursue the idea of staging the game."

England manager Glenn Hoddle said: "Of course I am very much willing to help. We shall be talking about what can be achieved."

Maradona admits addiction: 'I'm sick, I give up'

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona sobbed on national television late Monday admitting he had enough with his cocaine addiction, but vowing to fight to remain in the sport he loves so much.

"It's bad enough bearing this cross of an addiction without people wanting me off the soccer field, where I truly feel happy," Maradona said in his first public statement since he failed a drug test — the third of his career — after a soccer match last month.

"I am sick. I give up," Maradona said while turning down any outside help, he said, to avoid his case being turned into a political football in next month's legislative elections.

Maradona tested positive for cocaine after an Argentine League match nine days ago in which he scored a penalty for his club Boca Juniors.

The Argentine Football Association provisionally suspended Maradona on Friday and has summoned him for a hearing Tuesday.

If a second test proves positive this week, Maradona, who turns 37 in October, is likely to be suspended for up to five years.

Maradona, who has had several drug problems, was attempting his fifth career comeback. He had tested positive for drugs twice before, in 1991 when he was playing for Napoli and during the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

"It's horrible and repugnant the way they've dealt with this issue. All the media blitz and talk about the fallen giant was unnecessary," Maradona said growing highly emotional.

"It's repugnant for my daughters," he said in tears. "But I've already gathered my strength and explained everything to them. All four of us had a good cry," he added.

Maradona was in hiding over the weekend, first staying

out of sight in a friend's home in the wealthy Buenos Aires suburb of Recoleta and then returning to his own home.

"Once and for all, I want to see justice served in my country. I want to tell all those who think I'm washed out that on the soccer field I'm a happy man," Maradona told the television programme "Real Phenomenon."

"They are handing me a gun so I can shoot myself, but I have a 10-year-old daughter who now can analyse things and explain them to her sister."

"I'm 36 years old and I've never robbed or hurt anyone. I don't want any help from anybody. I earned my fans' affection by using my legs and being who I am. I've not asked for a single penny from anybody to pay for all the problems I've had and I'm not going to start now," Maradona said.

If he were to pass the second drug test scheduled for Wednesday, he added, he should be allowed to play with his home team of Boca Juniors.

Maradona, however, admitted he could not predict "the outcome of the second test."

Maradona's agent Guillermo Coppola and Boca Juniors vice president Luis Conde, both praised the soccer star's statements and outpouring of emotion after his interview.

"What a pair you have, Diego," Conde said, adding that Wednesday's drug test was in the hands of God.

"If (the test) turns out positive it's not important... Please, let's look deeper into this. The truth is that we have to help him recuperate," Conde added.

Maradona was playing for Argentinos Juniors in the Argentine First Division by the age of 16 and was Argentina's inspiration in four World Cup campaigns, including the 1986 triumph.

He played 92 internationals and his clubs have included Barcelona, Napoli and Seville.

Russians have gymnastics gold in sights

LAUSANNE (AFP) — Russia had gymnastics glory in their sights Monday night after their women raced to the head of the standings on the opening day of team competition here at the 33rd world championships.

The Russians scored 153.301 points in their qualifying round to edge the talented Chinese into second spot.

The Chinese, looking for their first team title, excelled on the asymmetric bars with a string of tens, but, unusually, they were less happy on the balance beam.

In the end they scored 152.045 points to see off strong competition from Romania, the reigning champions, who notched up 151.469 points. Ukraine were a distant fourth, ahead of a mediocre U.S. squad which contains just one of its Atlanta Olympic champions in Dominique Moceanu.

Nonetheless, the Americans secured, along with France, a final qualifying place to avert humiliation.

Ukraine found themselves reduced to a skeleton team of just four gymnasts instead of six after Olympic champion Lilia Podkopaieva and Viktoria Karpenko pulled out.

Podkopaieva sprained her ankle trying a horse vault in training while Karpenko



Wenjing Bi of China performs her beam exercise during the women's qualification round of the World Gymnastic Championships in Lausanne. The women's team final will be held on September 4 (Reuters photo)

fractured two fingers while exercising on the balance beam.

Team officials had vainly hoped right up until the last

moment they would both be fit for competition.

With just four competitors remaining, Ukraine, who placed fifth at Atlanta last summer and two years ago in Sabae, Japan, will have their work cut out to make a strong impression this time.

As the four best marks are taken into account, the whole quarter will have to perform well.

The loss of Podkopaieva could open the door to a triumph by elegant Russian Svetlana Khorkina, who was top of the individual standings and is well-placed to garner the individual title.

Romania also has hopes of obtaining individual glory through Gina Gogean, who excelled in both the floor exercises and on the balance beam.

The chief absentee at the championships is Vitaly Shcherbo of Belarus, who won six gold medals at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona but who decided not to attend.

U.S.-based Shcherbo, who could win only three bronzes last year in Atlanta, recently moved from Philadelphia to Las Vegas, where he is launching his own gymnastics club.



Spectators awaiting the match between English Premier League teams Bolton Wanderers and Everton stand for a one minute silence before their match, in memory of Diana Princess of Wales. The Princess died after a high speed car crash in Paris which also killed her companion Dodi Al Fayed and their driver (Reuters photo)

NFL champs open with win

GREEN BAY, Wisconsin (AFP) — Brett Favre threw for 226 yards and two touchdowns to lead reigning National Football League champion Green Bay past Chicago 38-24 in an American football season opener.

And rookie Bill Schroeder Favre looked rusty early but hit backup tight end Jeff Thomson for a one-yard touchdown toss midway through the second quarter and found Robert Brooks for an 18-yard score 48 seconds before half-time to put Green Bay ahead to stay, 18-11.

"Anytime you score before the half, it gives you a big lift," Packers coach Mike Holmgren said. "I'm very happy for Robert. To have him back on the field and contributing is great for our team."

The Packers also stretched their home win streak to 19 games.

"When we discover certain aspects of other places, we run with it. It's great - it's time. We're becoming more sophisticated and more discerning" (A customer)

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Referee denies Bolton win

LONDON (AFP) — Bolton were robbed of victory in their first game in their new Reebok Stadium on Monday as the match officials failed to notice that Gerry Taggart's second half header sent the ball at least a foot over the Everton line, leaving the teams to share a drab goalless draw.

The main talking point came early in the second half when Neville Southall, under heavy pressure from Noel Blake, allowed Taggart's header to loop over his head. And although the ball was clearly over the line before Terry Phelan cleared, the referee waved play on.

The match, watched by a capacity 25,000 crowd, began with a minute's silence for Diana, Princess of Wales, and when the game started Bolton seemed to have their minds on other matters.

Everton totally dominated in the opening half hour, creating and missing several chances.

The first came after just five minutes when Graham Stuart fired past the post from 25 yards and soon after 18-year-old John Oster saw his shot blocked.

In the 15th minute Bolton gifted chances to Nick Barmby and Ferguson through careless defending, which were scrambled away at the expense of a corner and Oster then hit the angle of post and bar when he should have scored.

But in their first real attack Bolton should themselves have scored as a great ball by Per Frandsen played Nathan Blake through only for Neville Southall to save well.

Bolton looked much more fired up in the second half and should have gone ahead eight minutes into it with Taggart's header.

From then on the game got messy, not helped by a series of substitutions.

Bolton's Robbie Elliott was stretched off after landing awkwardly in a tackle and the former Newcastle man was rushed to hospital with a suspected double fracture to his leg.

Everton's England defender Andy Hinchcliffe

came on after 66 minutes to make his First League appearance in nine months following separate cruciate knee ligament and thigh injuries.

His first contribution was to was to thump a free kick into a Bolton wall.

The game continued to be riddled with poor passing and basic mistakes but it meant there was always the chance of a breakthrough.

Blake fired over after being played in by a nice touch by Peter Beardsley while at the other end Nick Barmby dragged a shot across goal.

With 10 minutes to go Danny Williamson picked out Everton captain Speed with a great 30 yard ball but the Welshman's header flew inches over.

But it seemed destined to end goalless, a result of little use to two sides who may be facing a long, hard season in the bottom half of the table.

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Q A Q 10
A Q 7
WEST
A 10 8 5
Q K J
9 8
A J 9 6 5 3 2
SOUTH
A 7 2
Q A Q 8 7 3
Q E J 8 4 3
A 10
The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1st Pass 10 Pass
2nd Pass 30 Pass
3rd Pass 40 Pass
4th Pass 50 Pass
5th Pass 60 Pass
Opening lead: Five of 4.
There are many fascinating suit combinations that can be played in different ways. Consider the case where you are missing K J 10 x x in the trump suit. You elect to take a deep finesse and lose to the jack or ten. Since your right-hand oppo-



STANDING IN LINE: A punk waits in the queue to lay a wreath at Buckingham Palace in London, Tuesday. The funeral for Diana, Princess of Wales, who died in a car accident in Paris on Sunday along with her friend Dodi Fayed and his driver, will take place next Saturday (Reuters photo)

Diana crash driver said to be serious and trustworthy

PARIS (R) — Henri Paul, the driver who lost control in the high-speed crash that killed the late Princess Diana, her companion Dodi Fayed and himself, won posthumous praise on Tuesday as a serious and trustworthy person.

But his employer, the luxury hotel Ritz owned by Fayed's father, fended off journalists' questions about whether its deputy security director was drunk at the wheel when he tried to shake off paparazzi chasing his passengers.

Several newspapers quoted an unnamed photographer as hearing Paul boasting to waiting paparazzi: "You won't catch me."

Anonymous colleagues painted contradictory pictures, some describing him as a teetotaler and others as a drunk.

The hotel said it would be making a statement later in the day but declined to say when it could be expected.

Friends and colleagues interviewed in the French press expressed surprise that the 41-year-old Breton, a former air force officer, was involved in the spectacular crash in central Paris early on Sunday.

Justice sources said he had more than three times the legal limit of alcohol in his blood — the equivalent of about four glasses of whisky

or two aperitifs and a bottle of wine.

"He was a very friendly guy, very serious," one long-time friend, Air France pilot Jean-Louis Le Barillec, told the Ouest France daily.

"One cannot say he was a drunk," a Ritz colleague told the daily Le Parisien, despite strict instructions to the staff not to speak to the press.

"But it all happened so quickly on Saturday evening," he said of Paul, who was called in at the last minute to drive Diana's car after paparazzi had surrounded Dodi's car outside the hotel. "Dodi was the son of the owner and it was an order."

Harrods, the luxury London store Mohammed Fayed also owns, issued a statement on Monday which condemned drunken driving in strong terms but praised Paul as "a conscientious and responsible member of staff."

It stressed that Paul had twice attended special driving classes for limousine chauffeurs at a Mercedes Benz training track in Stuttgart, Germany.

"Mr. Paul had met Mr. Dodi Fayed and the Princess of Wales when they arrived by plane in Paris earlier in the day on Saturday," it said. "He drove them into the city," it said.

The Harrods statement, following arguments put forward energetically by Paris lawyers for the Fayed family, laid the blame on a large motorcycle which it said swerved in front of the car Paul was driving.

"The photographers were shooting pictures with flash guns into the car carrying the princess and Mr. Fayed, with consequences which are now familiar to us all," it said.

But a lawyer for one of the photographers targeted in the crash inquiry said he had seen the 350-page police report which made no mention of a motorcycle zig-zagging in front of the car.

The popular daily France-Soir quoted an anonymous Ritz official as describing Paul as "calm and very competent."

"He mastered the technique of high-speed driving," he said. "He must have been surprised by the car's power and could not control the speed."

In the daily Liberation, one Ritz employee said Paul had given up drinking last year and had been seen drinking only orange juice at a reception at the hotel last week. Another said he came to work one day last week completely intoxicated.

Women's activist gets senior post at Iran interior ministry

TEHRAN (AP) — The interior minister has appointed the country's first director-general for women's affairs, a woman described by Iranian media Tuesday as a rights activist.

Abdullah Nouri appointed Zahra Shojaei Monday as the ministry's director-general on women's issues, said officials at her office, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

Iran News, an English language newspaper, called Ms. Shojaei a "long-time women's rights activist" but gave no details on specific actions that she has taken.

Nouri's advisor on women's issues when he was interior minister from 1989-1993. She was formerly a professor of political science at a Tehran University.

Ms. Shojaei is the third woman to be appointed to a senior post in the government of President Mohammad Khatami. Mr. Khatami earlier named Massoumeh Ebtekar, a U.S.-educated lecturer, as a vice-president. Culture Minister Ataollah Mohajerani appointed Aazam Nouri as Deputy Culture Minister for legal and parliamentary affairs. They are the first women

to serve in top government posts since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Mr. Nouri, like Mr. Khatami, is a moderate. Before his appointment by parliament he was bitterly attacked by hard-liners for being too liberal.

Mr. Khatami won office by a landslide in May elections and was seen by his supporters as likely to ease two decades of social restrictions imposed by Iran's ruling clerics.

Ms. Shojaei is a member of the Women's Social and Cultural Council, which is affiliated with the cultural revolution high council.

Israel, U.S. and Turkey to hold military exercise in November

ANKARA (AFP) — Israeli, Turkish and U.S. troops have set the date for joint naval manoeuvres that have worried the Arab World, scheduling them from November 15 to 25 off Israel in the eastern Mediterranean, the Israeli embassy said here Tuesday.

The manoeuvres triggered strong criticism from near-by Arab countries, notably Egypt and Syria, and Iran when they were first announced last May though no specific date was set at the time.

Embassy spokesman Nissam Admire told Agence France Presse the military exercises will have a

"humanitarian nature" because they will involve "search and rescue" exercises.

"We emphasise that the cooperation between Israel and Turkey is like any other cooperation between two friendly states and is not targeted against any third country whatsoever," he said.

The manoeuvres were planned for in a framework agreement on military cooperation between Israel and Turkey signed in February 1996. A provision also allowed for the U.S., Turkey's ally in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), to be included in the joint naval

exercises. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was among the most vocal critics last August, saying the prospect of such manoeuvres raised concern and fear in the Arab World and Iran.

But the overall growth in Turkish-Israeli military cooperation has helped fuel the concern. Last year, this cooperation took a huge leap with two major agreements between Israel and Turkey in the areas of defence and the military industry.

Three of Turkey's immediate neighbours, Iran, Iraq and Syria, last August saw the military cooperation as

directed against them, though both Tel Aviv and Ankara denied this.

The Turkish-Israeli agreement plans for exchange in the fields of information, personnel and notably allowing fighter planes from each country to conduct training flights in the air-space of the other.

During an unprecedented visit to Israel in April by the former Turkish Defence Minister Turhan Tayan, his Israeli counterpart Yitzhak Mordechai said the two countries were "free, democratic and backed peace" and "their cooperation was necessary for the stability of the Middle East."

Algerian television worker found dead, throat cut

PARIS (R) — Suspected Muslim rebels killed an Algerian television director's assistant at the weekend, cutting her throat in an Algiers suburb, Algerian newspapers said Tuesday.

News of the latest killing coincided with a report in the London-based newspaper Al Hayat saying that official Algerian figures showed 256 died in the Sidi Rais massacre overnight last Thursday-Friday, the single worst slaughter in nearly six years of violence.

Liberte and Le Matin newspapers said worker Zoubida Berkane, 27 and mother of a small child, was intercepted at a fake road block near Bab Ezouar, in eastern Algiers Saturday night.

Her body was found by a gendarmie patrol. Al Khabar said she was one of three women killed at Bouchaoui, a suburb in the west of the capital. The three had taken a taxi around 6.30 p.m. Saturday and were later found dead.

According to Al Watan, her body was found in Bouchaoui forest. It said she had been stopped while she was with a friend by men asking for identity papers. She believed they were police.

Al Watan said she showed them her identity card. They then cut her throat. More than 60 media employees, mostly journalists, have been killed in Algeria's near six-year-old violence which authorities blame on Islamist militants.

The Islamists have accused the media, which operates in the shadow of draconian government powers, of supporting the authorities.

About 60,000 people have been killed since violence erupted in the north African country shortly after the authorities in January 1992 cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a huge lead.

Commenting again on last week's massacre in Sidi Rais, Al Hayat said it "caused the deaths of 256 people according to the latest report of the interior ministry" to the head of government.

The Algerian government has given a figure of 98 dead and 120 wounded, 30 of them seriously, in the attack. Residents said up to 300 died.

Al Hayat said in further killings in Algeria the Algerian newspaper Al Alam Assassi had reported the deaths of another 32 people in Tissemsilt area and Boumerdes overnight Saturday-Sunday.

Algerian newspapers on Monday reported at least another 50 people killed in different parts of Algeria, including 19 in two attacks in the capital, 20 just outside the city, and 15 rebels being killed by security forces south of Algiers.

Israel responds to criticism on treatment of foreign workers

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's foreign ministry pledged Tuesday to ensure "humane treatment" of foreign workers after a Romanian labourer died at a Tel Aviv construction site from a lack of medical attention.

Eitan Ben-Tsur, the number two official at the ministry, promised a greater government effort to improve working conditions for foreign labourers during a meeting Tuesday with Romania's ambassador in Israel, George Popescu, officials said.

Israel radio said Mr. Ben-Tsur for his part complained to the ambassador over a report in a Romanian newspaper that compared work sites which employ foreigners in Israel to "extermination camps."

"We are going to remind all government agencies and ministries that everything must be done to protect the social rights of immigrant workers," a foreign ministry spokesman said.

Controversy flared over the treatment of foreign workers after a Romanian labourer, Antoine Beta, 62, became ill at the construction site where he worked outside Tel Aviv, did not receive medical help and died.

An Israeli workers' rights association, Workers' Hotline, said the Romanian's death highlighted widespread mistreatment of foreigners brought into Israel in recent years to replace Palestinian labourers, notably in the farm and construction sectors.

"Their living conditions are often inhuman, they work 12 and 13 hours a day at work sites where normal security regulations are not enforced," said Jason Mayers of Workers' Hotline.

He said the association also received numerous complaints from foreign workers who did not receive their salaries or were paid

less than the legal minimum wage of \$690 for 186 hours of work.

Many employers also broke the law by confiscating workers' passports, often to make sure they recovered a \$1,700 deposit paid to the interior ministry for each immigrant employed, to ensure they leave the country after their contract expires, Mayers said.

For the past three years, Israel has authorised about 100,000 foreigners to work in the country in the place of Palestinians who are prevented from entering the country from the West Bank and Gaza Strip by repeated travel bans imposed by Israel's right-wing government.

Of the 100,000, about three-quarters are Romanians, with others coming from Thailand, the Philippines and Bulgaria. Officials estimate that another 100,000 to 200,000 foreigners work illegally in the country.

Greenpeace says Spanish, Lebanese companies dump toxins in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — Greenpeace accused two Spanish companies and a Lebanese enterprise Tuesday of burying toxic waste, some of it from Italian manufacturers, in a ravine near Beirut.

A statement from the environmental activist group said Spanish firms Entracanales and Cubiertas and the Lebanese company Samir Cheddad SARL were hired by Lebanon to "handle and rehabilitate" the waste from a dump near Beirut's port, which was closed so it could be expanded.

The two Spanish compa-

nies signed a contract in late 1996 to enlarge the port and build a terminal that could handle 400,000 containers a year.

The project's cost was \$102 million, \$57 million of which was advanced by the European Investment Bank.

The port's management, which received technical assistance from France's Marseille port, ordered work to begin in mid-January.

Greenpeace charged that instead of treating the waste, the companies were burying millions of tonnes of it in the garbage dump at

the Monteverde hill ravine northeast of Beirut.

The waste includes domestic, industrial and hospital garbage and hundreds of barrels of toxic industrial waste brought to Lebanon in 1987 and originating in Italy, Greenpeace said.

"If the Monteverde waste isn't treated before the rainy season which begins in October or November, the water table and the pumping units that supply Beirut with potable water will be contaminated," Greenpeace warned.

West is after Libya's sun, sand and camel milk — Qadhafi

TUNIS (R) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has warned his people that Western countries might invade Libya because of its sun, sand, seashore, dates, watermelons...and camel milk.

"The Western countries might invade you one day because of your sun," he said in a speech Monday night marking the 28th anniversary of his rule.

"They don't have sun to produce solar energy, and Libya is a sunny country and is the best placed on the

planet towards the sun. "Sand is a raw material and the Libyan sand is of high quality."

"They might colonise you for your watermelons, which are excellent because of the quality of Libya's sand."

"Libya has more than 1,200 kilometres of coast on the Mediterranean. They might colonise you for that. "The Libyan dates cannot be matched. They might want to take them."

"The camel is also a reason for them to invade

Libya. The camel is unique because he can go for months without drinking. He also has good milk. In fact, why do you import milk from Europe when you have the camel's milk?"

For years, Colonel Qadhafi has been warning his people that the West wanted to take their oil — the north African country's main source of revenue.

His speech in the coastal city of Sirte was broadcast by Libya's state-run television and monitored in Tunis.

Kurds jailed for more than 5 years for planning anti-Turkish attacks

DUESSELDORF (AFP) — Two Turkish Kurds were given sentences of up to five years and nine months in prison here Tuesday for masterminding attacks against Turkish interests in Germany in 1993 which claimed one fatality.

The court said the two members of the banned

separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) prepared several attacks in 1993 in west Germany and Berlin.

Haydar Ergul, 41, was jailed for five years and nine months while Nihat Asul, 37, was sentenced to five years in prison, both for attempted arson and damaging 140 Turkish

properties in attacks protesting against Turkey's crackdown on its Kurdish minority.

A 35-year-old man had died in a fire at Wiesbaden. Investigators said about 800 Kurds were involved in the 1993 attacks throughout Germany.



DEATH OF THE PRINCESS

Palestinian businessman wants to buy mangled car

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Marwan Mahmoud Hindi, 42, a Palestinian businessman residing in Kuwait said he was ready to pay more than one million dollars for the vehicle which was destroyed in the high-speed crash that killed the princess and her millionaire companion Dodi Fayed early on Sunday. "I like Diana and I want to keep a memory of her," Hindi told Agence France Presse after first announcing his intentions to the local newspaper Al Seyassah. But Hindi added the crumpled remains of the 1994 Mercedes S 280 could also prove a "good investment" that might sell for \$5 million or \$10 million in five or 10 years time.

Palace triples number of condolence books

LONDON (AFP) — Buckingham Palace overnight tripled the number of condolence books being made available to thousands of people mourning the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, a spokesman said Tuesday. People queued throughout the night at St. James Palace, London, where Diana's body is lying in a private chapel, to write tributes to the princess killed in a Paris car crash early Sunday. "The minimum waiting time was five hours and about 200 people an hour were signing the books," the spokesman said.

Millions watch TV on Diana's death

LONDON (AFP) — An estimated 19 million people in Britain alone watched the ceremonial return of the Princess of Wales' body from France to England on Sunday, broadcast live by Britain's three main television channels. A normal Sunday evening audience is around nine million. In Germany, well over 11 million people watched a special programme on the main public TV channel ARD, called "Death in the tunnel," on Sunday evening. The German non-stop news channel NTV for its part recorded over 12 million viewers during the day Sunday, its highest-ever figure.

Collectors rush to buy Diana stamps in HK

HONG KONG (R) — Avid Hong Kong stamp collectors rushed to snap up a 1989 commemorative issue featuring the late Princess Diana as dealers jacked up prices by hundreds of Hong Kong dollars. "Before the princess's death, only a handful of people would collect her stamp," said Tam Shek-Lam, who runs a stamp shop in the Mongkok district. "But after hearing of her death, people are snapping them up," he told Reuters. The series was issued in 1989 to mark a visit by the heir to the British throne, Prince Charles, and his then wife, Princess Diana, to the former British colony. They later divorced.

Zeffirelli slams praise for Diana

ROME (AFP) — Italian film director Franco Zeffirelli lashed out Monday at the "stupidity" of people for idolising Princess Diana "as if she were a saint" after she was killed in a weekend car crash in Paris. "The whole world, even the highest levels of Italian government, has idolised Diana as if she were a saint, even though her 'humanitarian work' was due to a skillful public relations strategy," Zeffirelli said. "It's a shameful scene of general stupidity," he added. "I don't understand why an autopsy was conducted only on the car's driver. The accident may have been caused by general partying," involving Diana and Dodi Fayed, he added.

Israel to sign treaty banning chemical weapons

Volume 22 Number 62

Majali says N... mean Albright... on Syrian... complaints on

First paper under new

Britain to protest to